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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The General Assembly, at its fifty-third session, adopted resolution 53/53 entitled "Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories", in which, among other matters, it requested the Special Committee

> "... pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli lack of compliance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;
>
> "... to submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem;
>
> "... to continue to investigate the treatment of prisoners in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967."

The Special Committee, as in previous years, reports to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General.

The attached periodic report of the Special Committee covers the period February through August 1999.

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I. Situation of human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories: Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem

A. General introductory observations

B. Conditions that are restrictive with respect to Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem

1. Restrictions relating to land, housing and water

Land

1. On 3 February 1999, it was reported that a Magistrates Court had released on bail a Kiryat Arba settlement resident, Reovin Ben Blak. Blak was accused of trespassing and planting trees, on a private plot of Palestinian land near Kiryat Arba during the Tu Bishvat festival. Blak had allegedly dismissed and threatened the lot's owner. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 February)

2. On 17 February, an Israeli army bulldozer vandalized 40 dunums of tomato fields in the Jiftlik area of Jericho district. The land is considered by the Israeli authorities to be under the jurisdiction of Israel. Palestinian landowners say they have the documents that prove they are the lawful owners of the property. In a separate development, Israeli bulldozers levelled land belonging to the Arab villages of Shofeh and Kufr Labad in the Tulkarem district, near the Jewish settlement of Avni Hifetz. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 February)

3. On 24 February, it was revealed that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu had offered to the Palestinians, through third parties, "partial measures" to revive certain aspects of the Wye accord. Sources close to the negotiations stated that Netanyahu offered to release petty criminals and open a southern route for safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians rejected the offers because they failed to include any further territorial withdrawals from the West Bank, as called for under the Wye agreement. Netanyahu's spokesperson stated that "The intention is partial steps, that don't involve handing over territories ...". Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat refused to confirm or deny the existence of the offers, emphasizing that "We don't accept partial measures. To exclude a territorial component is to make the peace process meaningless." Erekat said that he suspected any election-period offer from Netanyahu would be an attempt to persuade the electorate that he is serious about peace, while not alienating right-wingers with a territorial component. (*Ha'aretz*, 25 February)

4. On 28 February, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated at a press conference following a meeting with King Abdullah of Jordan, "We have a simple proposal for the Palestinians and all those who want to test us and that is: test us. Have the Palestinians complete all or part of the Wye accords and we will either, in the case of full compliance, do our part, which is to hand over the additional 5 per cent or we can find other areas of cooperating and implementation short of complete Palestinian implementation ...". The Palestinian Authority rejected Prime Minister Netanyahu's invitation to hold talks on partial implementation of the Wye accords, saying that it would not accept anything less than further Israeli troop redeployment, as specified in the pact. (*Jerusalem Post*, 1 March, *Jerusalem Post*, 2 March)

5. On 22 March, IDF troops fired rubber-coated metal bullets at Palestinians during a land dispute. The clashes erupted after dozens of soldiers uprooted 170 olive tree saplings from a plot near the village of Beit-Dajan, 16 km East of Nablus. Two weeks before, the Israeli Army uprooted 500 fully grown trees from the plot, stating that the area was state land. In response, farmers and peace activists from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition planted the 170 saplings that were later uprooted by IDF troops. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 23 March)

6. On 7 April, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat told Japan's Foreign Minister that a decision will be made on whether to declare statehood by about 27 April, a Japanese Government official stated. Prime Minister Netanyahu threatened to annex parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip if Arafat makes the declaration. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 April)

7. On 13 April, nearly 2,220 dunums of land were confiscated at Bethlehem and Beit Sahour to build a 6.5 km-long bypass road. The road serves as a belt circling the city of Bethlehem and prevents its expansion. More than 50 per cent of the land surrounding Bethlehem has been declared a closed military area to be used for training. Water sources from this district are also under the control of Israel. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

8. On 16 April, it was reported that a confidential opinion had been prepared by Foreign Ministry Legal Counsel Alan Baker in preparation for 4 May (the date on which interim self-rule arrangements expire). According to this opinion, the annexation of West Bank land under Israeli control, in response to a unilateral declaration of a Palestinian State, would raise "serious doubts concerning the legality" of such annexation. Baker stated that even if Palestinians do not

declare a state on 4 May, Israel will be forced to take a stand on the validity of its agreements with them, since both Israelis and Palestinians who oppose the Oslo Accords are likely to challenge the legitimacy of Palestinian Authority institutions. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 April)

9. On 26 April, Prime Minister Netanyahu told Israel Radio that his Government's threat to annex parts of the West Bank had caused the Palestinian leadership to back away from a May 4 declaration of a Palestinian State. Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon repeated the threat in remarks to reporters in Rome. "I have already advocated to the Palestinians not to declare any unilateral declarations", he said. "Israel immediately will extend its law and administration and ... it will annex immediately all those areas which are in our hands. We would be ready to take steps that we would like to avoid ... because through the Oslo accords everything should be achieved through negotiations", Sharon said. May 4 is the date that interim self-rule arrangements expire. Marwan Kanafani, a Palestinian legislator and adviser to Palestinian Authority President Arafat stated that "... those who expected a decision calling for an extension or those waiting for a decision calling for a declaration of the state will be disappointed". (*Jerusalem Post*, 27 April)

10. On 27 April, the PLO Central Council gathered to discuss a delay of the declaration of a Palestinian state, scheduled for May 4. Statements from the White House, the EU and Japan have urged Palestinians to postpone the declaration for another year, fearing that such a declaration would ruin the peace process. Prime Minister Netanyahu also threatened to annex West Bank territories if a state was declared. The Council decided to postpone any announcement until some time in June or July, after the Israeli elections. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 30 April and 7 May)

11. On 19 May, Israeli bulldozers uprooted dozens of olive trees near the Beit Dajan village in the West Bank. A Civil Administration spokesperson stated that the trees were uprooted because they had been planted on "State land". (*Ha'aretz*, 20 May)

12. On 30 May, Palestinian Authority officials called for a public strike to protest against the Israeli Government's decision to add 12,000 dunums (3,000 acres) to the Ma'aleh Adumim settlement. A conference of senior Palestinian officials and negotiators set the following Thursday as a Palestinian "Day of Anger" to be marked by marches throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Ma'aleh Adumim expansion is aimed at linking it to areas of Jerusalem that Israel captured and then annexed during the Six Day War. The plan will make the settlement, which has about 25,000 residents, larger in land area than Tel Aviv (which, by comparison, has about 355,000 residents). It was to be carried out on land that was expropriated from nearby Palestinian villages of Issawiyah, Anata, A-Tur, Abu Dis, and Eizariyah. (*Jerusalem Post*, 31 May)

13. On 2 July, it was reported that the Israeli police in Jerusalem had uncovered an underground gang that has been involved in forging land sale documents in East Jerusalem. Two land brokers, one Palestinian and one Jewish, were recently arrested when they tried to sell Armenian property to Israeli groups. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 2 July)

14. On 9 July, it was reported that a study conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights revealed that the Israeli occupation forces still control 42 per cent of the Gaza Strip. The report indicated that settlements absorb about 9,250 acres of the total area of the Strip. The rest consists of 42,000 acres of farmland, fourteen thousand acres of residential area, and slightly less than 26,000 acres of barren land and sand dunes. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 July)

15. On 11 July, Prime Minister Ehud Barak stated, after meeting with Palestinian Authority President Arafat, that Israel and the Palestinian Authority were to begin discussion on the Wye agreement approximately 10 days later, after Barak's return from his visit to the United States and Britain. The two leaders came out of the meeting with encouraging statements about building confidence and understanding. Barak told Arafat that his new Government was committed to implement all international agreements signed by previous Governments, including Wye. He asked Arafat to examine the possibility of integrating the Wye agreement into the permanent settlement so that political difficulties connected to a future withdrawal in the West Bank would not hurt the final settlement. It was reported that the American Administration regarded the Erez summit, the first top-level Israeli-Palestinian meeting in nearly eight months, as the opening of a new era in which communication will be improved between Barak and Arafat. The latter stated at the joint press conference that he believed that Barak's Government should "fulfil all its responsibilities and fully comply with the agreement". This, he specified, includes not only the three phases of redeployment, but also such matters as opening the safe passage routes and the Gaza Port, continuing to fulfil political and economic Hebron Protocol provisions, and releasing political prisoners. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 July)

16. On 12 July, it was reported that IDF had already reactivated plans, originally drafted during Binyamin Netanyahu's term in office, to implement the Wye agreement and would be able to carry out the plans within two months.

During the second stage of the second part of the withdrawal, implemented in November 1998, no IDF military bases in the West Bank were evacuated. Several bases, however, had been earmarked for evacuation or relocation in the subsequent stages of withdrawal that were never implemented. The second phase of withdrawal was to take place in the Ramallah-Nablus area and did not require the evacuation or relocation of any army bases, although some checkpoints were to be removed. The third phase was to be mainly in the Hebron area, and included the evacuation of the Adoraim base west of Hebron, even though the base itself was not to be handed over to the Palestinian Authority. All planned relocations were to be coordinated with the United States, which is to pay the greater part of the expenses. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 July)

17. On 15 July, on the eve of his meeting with United States President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Barak was expected to use the opportunity to lay out Israel's "red lines" in terms of the final status agreement with the Palestinians. It was reported that Barak was likely to ask for Clinton's acceptance of these lines. According to a senior Israeli delegation member, the feeling in Barak's circles that the Wye agreement was not necessarily cast in stone and that the Prime Minister was likely to request modifications of the agreement. Barak believed that the peace process would be best served if the Wye agreement were to be implemented in conjunction with the final status talks. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 15 July)

18. On 18 July, it was reported that according to a White House source, the United States was inclined to accept Prime Minister Barak's ideas about modifying the Wye implementation schedule. Barak, in turn, repeated his stand that while Israel abides by international agreements, he nonetheless sees "a need to combine implementation of the Wye agreement with the final-status agreements". (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 18 July)

19. On 26 July, in advance of his meeting with Palestinian Authority President Arafat the following day, Prime Minister Barak called the Wye withdrawal map formulated by the Netanyahu Government "problematic". "It is an explosive situation from the security standpoint", Barak said in a Labor party meeting. Barak intended to try to convince Arafat that by agreeing to postpone the implementation of the second part of the Wye agreement, he would help both the Palestinian and Israeli sides. In his speech to the Knesset on 26 July, Barak stated that Israel would prefer to implement the later stages of the Wye agreement at the same time as the final status negotiations in order to remove potential obstacles. (*Jerusalem Post*, 27 July)

20. On 28 July, it was reported that Prime Minister Barak's working meeting the previous day with Palestinian Authority President Arafat had failed to achieve any major breakthroughs for the implementation of the Wye agreement, leaving the Palestinians disappointed. It was reported, however, that the two leaders had agreed to establish a preliminary working group to begin immediate discussion on continuing the Wye process. According to Barak, Arafat promised to give a final answer in two weeks as to the acceptability of the proposed delays in implementation. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 28 July)

21. On 12 August, it was reported that the gap between Israel and the Palestinians had been sharply narrowed with regard to the implementation of the Wye agreement. Prime Minister Barak signalled that he was willing to complete all three phases of the territorial withdrawal under the Wye accord by 15 February 2000. In a shift from his earlier position, Barak no longer insisted that the final withdrawal be completed with the outcome of final-status talks but agreed that it be implemented independently. However, Palestinians would like that the final phase of the withdrawal be completed by 15 November. The first of the three mandated Wye pull-backs took place in November 1998. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 11 and 12 August)

22. On 13 August, it was reported that the police had arrested a settler from the Kedumim settlement, and searched for two other settlers for uprooting olive trees belonging to residents of the nearby Palestinian village of Kafr Kadum. Police sources stated that during the last month, 23 trees were uprooted by settlers. A grenade was also discovered in an olive grove of the same Palestinian village. An Israeli official who deals with Palestinian affairs stated that he had no knowledge of a grenade being planted. He added, however, that he would not be surprised by such a development and recalled that during the 1980s an underground settler movement had perpetrated acts of violence against Palestinians. The official added that Palestinians in the Kedumim area voiced complaints from time to time about their trees being uprooted and were advised to file formal complaints with the police. (*Jerusalem Post*, 13 August)

23. On 14 August, Prime Minister Barak's office announced that the Prime Minister had instructed IDF to begin preparations for resuming implementation of the Wye agreement on 1 September. "This means the land hand-over will begin on 1 October", the statement said. The announcement by the Prime Minister's office came shortly before another meeting on the timetable for implementing the Wye agreement between chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat and Barak's envoy, attorney Gilad Sher, at

Jerusalem. According to its original timetable, the Wye agreement should have been implemented fully seven months earlier. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 15 August)

Settlements

24. On 2 February, Eli Cohen, the Defence Ministry's adviser on settlements, stated that the Defence Ministry planned to strengthen the settlements in the West Bank and to boost construction there, in advance of the May 17 elections. Cohen explained that this was in order to avoid a similar scenario to that which followed the June 1992 elections, when the Labour Party froze construction shortly after coming to power. Cohen stated that he sat with the newly appointed Defence Minister Arens and reviewed thoroughly the situation in the West Bank, including bypass roads and maps, with a view to planning increased settlement construction before the election. Arens himself, who met with settlement leaders and toured the West Bank settlements for the first time since his appointment, observed that settlements appeared to be flourishing. As for Hebron, Arens said that he believed that the Jewish community living there was entitled to live in security and to develop. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 3 February)

25. On 2 February, settlers from Alon Moreh in the Nablus district occupied one of the hills near the settlement, setting up three mobile homes. The settlers brought an electric generator and water tanks with them. The IDF closed off the area, preventing landowners from approaching their land. In another area, Israeli bulldozers uprooted olive trees from 180 dunums of land belonging to six villages north of Ramallah. In a related development, Defence Minister Arens unveiled plans to boost settlement activities before the 17 May Israeli election. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 February)

26. On 8 February, it was reported that an aerial survey of the West Bank settlement, conducted by the Peace Now movement, had revealed a substantial increase in building since Moshe Arens returned to the Defence Ministry less than two weeks earlier. According to *Ha'aretz*, the building was not just "legitimate" construction adjacent to existing houses in the settlements (construction about which the United States does not have explicit reservation), but also the establishment of new strongholds. The aerial survey included, *inter alia*, the following: east of Ramallah-Nablus road, three km south of Shvut Rachel, a new stronghold was established (four Caravans, a water tank and an Israeli flag); in Shvut Rachel six, another "suburb" of the settlement which was established about two months earlier, approximately 10 caravans were added and an asphalt road had been paved; north of Eli, a new stronghold had sprung up (water tower and a single caravan); another stronghold was established. A *Ha'aretz* reporter added that in order not to embarrass the Government, the strongholds were not defined as new settlements but as "neighbourhoods" of existing settlements. Although this terminology may be technically correct, since the strongholds were established within the boundaries of an existing master plan for each settlement, the boundaries are nevertheless quite elastic and the satellites distant from the mother settlement. The strongholds system, added *Ha'aretz*, is not an invention of the new Arens era but had rather gathered momentum before the Wye memorandum was signed last October, when the settlers established 10 strongholds in an attempt to establish facts on the ground before the second withdrawal. Mussi Raz of Peace Now claimed that since Arens took office, "The settlers have understood that they can do whatever they want. No one is stopping them and I am very concerned that as the elections approach, the Government and the Defence Ministry will cave in more and more." (*Ha'aretz*, 8 February)

27. On 8 February, the Civil Administration rejected charges by Peace Now that since the appointment of the Defence Minister Arens settlers had stepped up construction and set up illegal encampments in the West Bank. The Civil Administration declared that all of the encampments were satellite neighbourhoods of existing communities and within the individual communities' master plans. The Defence Ministry declined to comment on the issue. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 February)

28. On 10 February, the Israeli Foreign Ministry rejected the General Assembly resolution to convene a conference of the signatories of the Fourth Geneva Convention for discussions about the occupied Palestinian territories, and said that it would not attend the conference. The General Assembly called for a conference on July 15 to ensure that the Fourth Geneva Convention protecting civilians in occupied areas is respected in territories still under Israeli control. The General Assembly stressed the Convention's ban on settlements. Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that the peace deal with the Palestinians leaves the matter of settlement building to the final status negotiations which are yet to be held. "The attempt to prevent one side ... from having the natural growth of its communities while not imposing an equal constraint on Palestinian construction ... is unfair and unnecessary", Netanyahu told reporters. The General Assembly resolution called for "the immediate and full cessation of construction at Jebel Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) and of all other Israeli settlement activities, as well as of all illegal measures and actions in occupied East Jerusalem". (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 11 February)

29. On 15 February, Peace Now stated that during the first nine months of 1998, the population of the 10 largest settlements on the occupied territories had increased by 5.9 per cent. These settlements are home to approximately 50 per cent of the entire settler population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The highest increase was recorded in the ultra-Orthodox settlements of Modi'en Elit and Beitar Elit. In absolute numbers, the population of Ma'aley Adumim increased the most, by 1,500 inhabitants. In total, an additional 5,153 people were added to those people living in the 10 largest settlements. According to Peace Now, settlements' population increased three times over the expected natural birth rate. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 February)

30. On 16 February, after visiting the Jewish settlement at Hebron for the first time since he was appointed Defence Minister Arens promised to consider promoting accelerated construction there according to a spokesperson for the Jewish settlers. Arens himself told reporters that he wanted to determine if it was necessary to make any changes in order to safeguard the "Jewish community" in Hebron. Peace Now called Arens an extremist and demanded that Prime Minister Netanyahu fire him. "The solution for the Jewish settlers in Hebron is to evict them and not strengthen their presence", charged the spokesperson of Peace Now. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 17 February)

31. On 17 February, the Jerusalem police prevented a group of students from the Beit Orot Yeshiva from occupying a house in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. The original Palestinian house owner claimed that it was purchased illegally. Over the last six months, the Yeshiva has moved into six apartments nearby formerly owned by Palestinians, in an effort to resettle what they call the "Simon the Just" neighbourhood (named after the rabbi whose grave is nearby). The police took the Palestinian house owner and a yeshiva representative in for questioning. A police spokesperson said that the police had sealed the house and will announce the following day who could occupy it. The Yeshiva, whose main compound includes approximately 100 students, moved into a synagogue adjacent to the above-mentioned house two months before. "We want to revive the Jewish neighbourhood here, to reinstate what was once a vibrant Jewish community prior to 1967", said Chaim Silberstein, Beit Orot's executive director. Silberstein said that they plan to occupy some 40 apartments in the neighbourhood, on an area of about 16 dunums (1,000 m^2) of land. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 18 February)

32. IDF issued two orders to confiscate large areas of Dhahiriya, as well as to seize two houses in the old city of Hebron. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 February)

33. On 21 February, the final deadline was closed for bidding on 356 apartment units at Har Homa. It was the second round of bidding in a tender originally issued in January for 1,031 units. Eight contractors won rights to build 675 units, leaving 356 for the second round of bidding. Some contractors backed out of the project because of the political nature of Har Homa; a clause in the tender gives the Government the right to freeze the project out of "political considerations". The 1,031 apartments comprise about half the units for stage one of the project, which total 6,500 housing units for all stages. (*Jerusalem Post*, 21 February)

34. On 23 February, a report by the West Bank Defence Committee revealed a plan to sever Ramallah from Nablus. The report described it as the largest settlement plan in the West Bank. Thousands of dunums of land planted with olive trees will be confiscated and scores of houses will be destroyed. The integrity and continuity between the two main cities in the West Bank, Ramallah and Nablus, will be severed by a strip of by-pass roads, security areas, settlements that are expanded, and mobile homes running East-West and cutting the north and south of the area into two separate areas. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 26 February)

35. On 7 March, it was reported that a memorial service for Baruch Goldstein was held at Tel-Aviv. Goldstein, an American-born doctor who lived in Hebron, went on a shooting rampage in the Machpela Cave (Ibrahimi Mosque) during the Purim Festival of 1994, killing 29 Muslim worshippers before the survivors overpowered and killed him. "We want to remember him, he was a good man. He was a doctor. He served the country", said one of those attending. Approximately 30 Meretz Youth members gathered outside the building where the memorial service took place and protested against it. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 March)

36. On 9 March, it was reported that the Hebron Settlers Committee temporarily withdrew its bid to have four additional caravans installed in the Tel Rumeida neighbourhood. The Committee withdrew its bid in order to avert IDF implementation of plans to compensate Palestinian residents of the city by giving them access to "Road 1929", which was previously closed to Arab traffic. The settlers, who had originally requested installation of the caravans, appealed to Defence Minister Arens to put the plans on hold when they learned of IDF plans to open Road 1929, which runs along the Israeli-Palestinian border that divides the city. The caravans are special "light caravans", each of which can accommodate another caravan placed on top of it, making it easier for settlers to remain at Tel Rumeida while archaeologists carry out a "rescue dig" on the site. (*Ha'aretz*, 8 and 9 March)

37. On 9 March, Defence Minister Arens reversed his order that temporary homes on Hill 777 near the West Bank settlement of Itamar be removed, after settlers called on the Prime Minister's Office to intervene. Hill 777 was settled approximately three months earlier by members of National Secularists — a group of secular Israelis who support the National Religious Party — and young people from the neighbouring Itamar settlement. Peace Now responded to the reversal of the evacuation order by saying that political pressure from a group of extremist settlers should not cause the authorities to "turn tail". (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 10 March)

38. On 11 March, it was reported that a settlement-monitoring report published by the Peace Now movement claimed that a new encampment containing four mobile homes had been established six km east of the Itamar settlement two weeks earlier. Peace Now stated that since plans to demolish another encampment on a hill near Itamar were abandoned several days earlier due to settler pressure, the movement decided to publish details of the newly established settlement. According to Peace Now, the new settlement was an addition to some 15 new settlements or satellite neighbourhoods that have been established since the signing of the Wye accords. However, the movement stressed that this was the first time a new encampment had been set up far from the main community. A Civil Administration spokesperson said that he would investigate the claims but added that the majority of encampments set up by settlers over the past months had been established within the planning scheme of the communities. (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 March)

39. On 13 March, United States special Middle East envoy Dennis Ross spoke out forcefully against Israel's settlement policies and, for the first time, touched upon the need to establish a time limit for final-status talks. "We see settlement activity as very destructive to the pursuit of peace precisely because it predetermines and prejudges what ought to be negotiated", Ross said. David Bar Illan, Prime Minister Netanyahu's communications director, said in response that Israel "will continue to build in the villages and towns of Judea, Samaria and Gaza to satisfy the needs of the people who live in them, and their natural growth". (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 14 March)

40. On 16 March, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon told foreign ambassadors in Israel that settlements actually contribute to peace. Sharon was referring to remarks made earlier by United States special envoy Ross, who said that settlement activity in the West Bank "... was very destructive to the pursuit of peace". Sharon reiterated Israel's position on the status of Jerusalem and emphasized that the city would never be divided and would remain under Israeli sovereignty. In related news, it was reported that the United States Administration had criticized Israel for its recent statements supporting the expansion of settlements. State Department spokesman James Rubin said that the United States opposed "settlement activity" because it "jeopardizes" the chances for Israeli-Palestinian peace. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 17 March)

41. On 16 March 1999, the Arabic daily *Al Quds* reported that the Jerusalem City Council would approve a settlement project at Silwan and Jebel Al Mokaber. Two hundred housing units are to be built on 115 dunums of land confiscated more than two decades ago. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 March)

42. On 19 March, it was reported that the Israeli Government had announced the beginning of a worldwide campaign to reinforce what has been called "Israeli sovereignty in a united Jerusalem" and its refusal to "under any circumstance divide or internationalize Jerusalem". This move is violating not only international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions regarding East Jerusalem as Israeli occupied territory since 1967, but is also violating Palestinian and Israeli agreements. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 March)

43. On 24 March, it was revealed that Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert had demanded NIS 263 million which he said that the Government had promised to the city. Olmert said that he would use the upcoming ceremonial meeting with the Cabinet at the municipality to press his claim. According to Olmert, some NIS 130 million were slated to improve the East Jerusalem infrastructure. A further NIS 58 million were meant to bring new immigrants to Jerusalem in order to increase the Jewish majority whose figures had dropped below 70 per cent. The money would be used to convert dormitories at the Hebrew University into housing for immigrants and to construct another 1,200 temporary housing units. At the meeting Olmert also intended to demand payment of NIS 75 million "capital grant" which he said the Government had pledged. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 24 March)

44. On 24 March, the Israeli Government, during an extraordinary session in Jerusalem's City Hall, ordered an Interior Ministry commission examining Jerusalem borders to find ways to expand the city westward in order to make room for another 120,000 city housing units by the year 2020. Mayor Olmert used the opportunity to underscore the implications of the city's changing demographics, and warned that while the Jewish population had already declined to less than 70 per cent, if the trend continued Jews

will comprise only 57 per cent of the population by the year 2020. The Government also voted unanimously to earmark 0.25 per cent of each ministry's budget for what they called a "balancing budget" for Jerusalem. The city will also be awarded an NIS 75 million grant for 1999, bringing the "balancing budget" to NIS 270 million. In addition, Moshe Leon, Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office, was ordered to find ways to lower housing costs in the capital to below 100,000 dollars for an average apartment. (*Ha'aretz*, 25 March)

45. On 2 April, it was reported that Jewish settlers at Hebron were to hold a cornerstone near Beit Hadassa, marking the beginning of construction of apartment building Beit Hashesha. Among those expected to participate were Defence Minister Arens, Education Minister Yitzhak Levy and other government officials. The Peace Now spokesperson stated that her group was planning to protest the continued construction in the Jewish section of Hebron. It was reported that the Israeli police had granted Peace Now permission to demonstrate in Hebron the following week. This was the first time in several years that Peace Now had been allowed to protest in the occupied territories. Several weeks earlier, police had prevented Peace Now from demonstrating in Kiryat Arba settlement at the grave of Baruch Goldstein to press its demand to move the grave elsewhere. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 April)

46. On 4 April, Defence Minister Arens participated in the laying of a cornerstone to mark the beginning of the construction of "Beit Hashisha", a six-unit apartment building in the Jewish settlement inside Hebron. Addressing the crowd, Arens stated: "We did not return to Hebron to desert it again." Arens stated that he hoped that the ceremony would be one of many in the city. A spokesperson for Jewish settlers at Hebron stated that three construction projects were under way; Beit Hashisha, Beit Nahum and Yehuda, and Tel Rumeida, where double-decker mobile homes had been set up to allow for excavation prior to construction. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 5 April)

47. On 5 April, Prime Minister Netanyahu publicly reconciled with his brother-in-law Haggai Ben-Artzi, promising — in front of a room full of young right-wing activists — to protect all Jewish settlements. "I want to quote from his promise — not one settlement in the land of Israel will be moved", stated Ben Artzi, reading from a letter he received from Netanyahu. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 April)

48. On 9 April, United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright chided Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon during a meeting at Washington, D.C., for the Israeli Government's policy of expanding settlements. After the meeting, State Department Spokesperson James Rubin stated to reporters that "... we're concerned about an accelerated pattern of Israeli actions on the ground since Wye, which have become clearer in recent months. These actions involve both construction of new settlements as well as expanding their existing perimeters, in many cases involving expansion to distant hilltops." Sharon's spokesperson Ra'anan Gissin stated later that Sharon had told Albright "I don't know about any promises that exist. All I know is it's a government policy ... not to build new settlements — period." According to Gissin, Sharon emphasized that the restriction does not apply to expanding in existing areas, and that no building occurs on confiscated land. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 11 April)

49. On 9 April, Peace Now held an authorized demonstration in Hebron for the first time in 16 years opposite to the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque), calling for the removal of Jewish settlers from Hebron and a halt to Jewish construction in the city. The demonstration followed the laying of a foundation stone by Defence Minister Arens for the six-unit apartment building Beit Hashisha the week before. The Peace Now Movement also opposed construction at Tel Rumeida, some 500 m away from the Jewish quarter. (*Jerusalem Post*, 11 April)

50. On 9 April, it was reported that villagers from Beit Dajan in the Nablus area had set off to plant new olive trees in place of those recently uprooted by IDF. IDF set up in the vicinity a huge military camp on a 500-square-dunum plot of land owned by villagers from Tamoon and Toubas. The army also installed mobile homes. Palestinian farmers are worried that the land would later be handed over to settlers. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 April)

51. On 11 April, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Martin Indyk, while visiting Israel reiterated the Clinton Administration's displeasure with the Israeli Government's settlement policy, telling Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu that Washington has "concerns" about the ongoing expansion of settlements. (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 April)

52. On 11 April, settlers moved four tents onto a hill near the settlement of Kiryat Arba and turned three dogs loose to chase away the journalists who approached the site. The settlers claimed that the hilltop was within Kiryat Arba's municipal boundaries, but began packing up after Israeli soldiers declared it a closed military area. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

53. On 11 April, during a meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu, United States envoy Martin Indyk criticized settlement expansion and called it an obstacle to peace. The

next day, Netanyahu went to the Psagot settlement north of Ramallah and defiantly declared to 100 settlement leaders: "We have done a lot and we will do a lot more". The head of the Settlement Committee at the Palestinian Legislative Council, Salah Tamaari, commented: "They (the Israelis) are destroying Palestinian society. They are creating a situation where the peace process can go nowhere. If the land is gone, we have nothing to discuss with the Israelis." In a related development, United States satellite photos showed that there are 18 new settlements being set up on Palestinian land. Six were constructed before the Wye River accord and 12 after. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

54. On 12 April, Prime Minister Netanyahu inaugurated Sh'ar Binyamin, the site for the new Binyamin Region industrial park in the West Bank. Netanyahu told reporters that the site allowed for territorial contiguity of State land and will guarantee employment for hundreds of Jews in hi-tech and other industries. "Not as infiltrators in the night, but as proud citizens, proud Jews, in the light of the day, [we are] settling on hills, on our land", Netanyahu stated. In related news, Peace Now stated that an encampment had recently been established on a hilltop one km south of the Bracha settlement, consisting of two large tents, a generator and construction equipment. Peace Now stated that the encampment was one of 17 that had sprouted since the Wye accords or in the weeks immediately preceding them. A Civil Administration spokesperson stated that the encampment was on State land and part of Bracha's overall planning scheme that had received approval and therefore did not constitute a new settlement. Meanwhile, it was reported that armed settlers set up encampments on the outskirts of the Kiryat Arba settlement and one km South of the Bracha settlement, on the outskirts of Nablus. Police evicted 15 settlers at the Kiryat Arba encampment. A spokesperson for the Civil Administration said that the site was on State land, within Kiryat Arba's jurisdiction, but that the actual area had yet to receive building approval. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 13 April)

55. On 14 April, it was reported that United States satellites had recently revealed that since the Wye Accord, Israel had established 12 mobile home encampments on the West Bank hilltops and paved new access roads. According to *Ha'aretz*, these can be considered as new settlements, even though most are located not far from existing settlements. The takeover of hilltops is aimed at quickly expanding the amount of West Bank land under Israeli control before the sides begin final status talks, and before any modifications are made to the boundaries of the various regions (A, B and C) slated to be handed over to Palestinians. In related news, it was revealed that building starts in the West Bank settlements rose by 105 per cent in 1998, according to figures released by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS). Construction of 3,900 housing units was initiated in 1998, an increase from 1,900 in 1997 and 1,680 in 1996. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 14 April)

56. On 14 April, United States State Department spokesman Rubin stated that Prime Minister Netanyahu had assured United States officials repeatedly that there would be no new settlements and no expansion of existing settlements. Nonetheless, he said, there has been an "accelerated pattern" of both types of construction. (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 April)

57. On 19 April, it was reported that, according to figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics revealed a day earlier, the rate of growth in Israeli settlements had decreased to 7 per cent in 1998, from 9 per cent in 1997 and 9.4 per cent in 1996. However, during the past year the overall population in the West Bank settlements grew by 7.1 per cent. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 19 April)

58. On 14 April, a settler caravan set up one km East of the Samarian (northern West Bank) settlement of Ma'aleh Levona was deemed illegal by a Civil Administration official who said that it would soon be removed. Peace Now, which spotted the caravan three days earlier, stated it was the twentieth illegally established settlement in the West Bank since the signing of the Wye accords. However, a spokesperson for the Civil Administration said that of the 20 settlements Peace Now claims are illegal, the majority are new neighbourhoods or encampments that have been set up within existing communities' master plans. Peace Now charged that settlers had occupied eastern and western ridges from central Samaria (northern West Bank) to the Jordan Valley in order to prevent Palestinian land contiguity and influence the final-status negotiations. Peace Now stated that the second method settlers use is occupying areas at the border of existing communities in Area B. (*Jerusalem Post*, 25 April)

59. On 28 April, a United States spokesperson stated that Prime Minister Netanyahu had broken a secret promise to President Clinton and other senior United States officials that Israel would not expand settlements in the West Bank beyond the "contiguous periphery". United States and Israeli officials say this term is generally understood by both sides to mean that expansion should follow the last constructed house in the settlement. (*Ha'aretz*, 29 April)

60. On 30 April, it was reported that the Israeli Government had claimed that the new drive to build settlements is only a natural growth of existing settlements and not a creation of new ones. Concerning the twenty

settlements that have sprouted up on West Bank hilltops, the Government said that the new sites existed within the master plans of each established settlement. Peace Now activists said the 32 new sites in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been settled in the past two years. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics recently reported that the Jewish settler population grew 7 per cent last year to 172,000 — much faster than the general population growth of 2.3 per cent. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 30 April)

61. On 3 May, it was revealed by Peace Now during a press conference at its Jerusalem headquarters that 6,608 housing units were currently under construction in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and that 3,814 units were unoccupied. The movement's Director General stated that since the signing of the Wye accords the previous fall, 19 new outposts had gone up in the West Bank, mostly between the cities of Nablus and Ramallah. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 4 May)

62. On 3 May, Israeli Housing Minister Meir Porush inaugurated a new Jewish settlement in the Nablus area. Palestinian sources say that the new settlement is the nineteenth one established since the signing of the Wye River agreement. Porush said that the new settlement would accommodate a thousand families and will be expanded later into a full-fledged town. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 May)

63. On 6 May, Prime Minister Netanyahu submitted a request for earmarking NIS 400 million, to be spent over four years beginning in 1999, for a Jerusalem Municipality project entitled "Bolstering the city's unification". Former Finance Minister Avraham Shohat stated "This is a desperate attempt by the Prime Minister to save himself with money. It is transparent, unquestionable election bribery." (*Ha'aretz*, 7 May)

64. On 9 May, it was reported that according to Israeli military sources, Prime Minister Netanyahu's office had repeatedly scuttled army plans to dislodge illegal outposts set up by settlers in the occupied territories. There had been at least four such instances the week earlier, and in several of them the Prime Minister intervened personally. Since the Wye accords, the settlers had set up dozens of new outposts. According to *Ha'aretz*, although some of the new outposts were established after proper authorization, others including those near the settlements of Eli, Itamar, Bracha, Elon Moreh and Hatalmonim — were set up on private Palestinian land and were not included in master plans. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 May)

65. On 9 May, the Israeli Cabinet approved the transfer of NIS 400 million to the Jerusalem Municipality. Another proposal — to give NIS 20,000 in grants to purchasers of new apartments in any new Jerusalem neighbourhood during the coming two years — was also approved. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert insisted that the plan for transferring the funds was a three-year-old project, and that the improved infrastructure would benefit both the Jewish and the non-Jewish population of the city. Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed disbelief that the money transfer was creating such a scandal. "What is more important than strengthening Jerusalem?" he asked reporters after the meeting. "The city is in danger of becoming a capital without a Jewish majority. So, when we come and put in effort to ensure Jerusalem's remaining our Jewish capital, all citizens of this country should applaud us." (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 10 May)

66. On 9 May, 10 settler families moved into a recently established encampment containing 15 trailers at a site called Bruchin near the Palestinian city of Jenin. A Civil Administration spokesperson stated that the encampment was within another settlement's planning scheme and was therefore legal. In related news, it was reported that five caravans were set up 1.5 km East of Kochav Hashahar in the Jordan Valley. The week before, Israeli administration officers destroyed foundations set up for 12 trailers near Khirbat Ashoona outside the Eli settlement. A water tower and a trailer remained at the site, according to a Civil Administration spokesperson. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 10 May)

67. On 9 May, the Israeli Government ordered the confiscation of 200 acres of land in Jericho. The Government also approved a project to add 1,911 apartments to the 3,200 apartments that were built four years ago in the Matsipeh Yeriho settlement at Nabi Mousa near Jericho. Jerusalem Mayor Olmert said that 12 out of 31 construction plans had been approved for Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The plans include construction in the Beit Hanina, Shufat, Sawahreh and Sur Baher areas. Olmert said that the municipality had invested nearly $50 million to improve infrastructure in Jerusalem. In a separate development, settlers began setting up a yeshiva at the city of Bourqin, South-West of Nablus. Hundreds of settlers moved 15 mobile homes to a hilltop in the village. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 14 May)

68. On 10 May, it was reported that according to *Separate and Unequal* (Harvard University Press), a new book written by two advisers to former Mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek, Israel had used a "ruthless" quota system to thwart Palestinians from building legally in East Jerusalem. The housing quota for Palestinian neighbourhoods, which the authors argue had nothing to do with urban planning, was aimed at encouraging Palestinians to leave Jerusalem and at limiting the Arab population to 28.8 per cent (the level in June 1967). The quota was outlined in a 1993 document from

the city's planning department that the authors obtained from Kollek's personal archives. (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 May)

69. On 10 May, the Knesset Finance Committee approved the transfer of some NIS 13 million in funding for building infrastructure in the West Bank settlements and Jerusalem. Opposition Knesset Member Haim Oron stated that the move was made under the "... guise of transferring funds for new neighbourhoods in 32 settlements, but in reality it is for 32 new settlements beyond the borders of those settlements". Oron said that the expansion was to take place "in the most extreme settlements in the West Bank", such as Itamar, Elon Moreh, Bruhin, Yitzhar, Hermes, Kfar Tapuah, Har Bracha, Mevo Dotan, Machtesh, Ofra and Shilo. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 11 May)

70. On 12 May, it was reported that the Defence Ministry and the Civil Administration in the occupied territories had authorized the establishment of a new yeshiva on a hilltop named Dagan near the Efrat settlement. The yeshiva was to initially include dormitories for 50 students, and later a neighbourhood of some 350 houses. Meanwhile, it was reported that settlers from the Dugit settlement in the Gaza Strip had quarrelled with the Israeli army about a fence the settlers had erected, widening the perimeter of their settlement at one point by 200 m. The settlers claimed that they had government permission, but the army disagreed. Twice in the previous two days, the settlers had erected the fence and the army had taken it down. Elsewhere in Gaza, Palestinian demonstrators prevented Israeli trucks carrying construction material from crossing the Karni junction on their way to Jewish settlements in the area. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 May)

71. On 12 May, clashes broke out between Palestinians and settlers at a recently established encampment five km West of the Yitzhar settlement in the Nablus district, at a site called Khirbat Eskas. IDF troops separated the two sides and declared the area a closed military zone. It was reported that two Palestinians suffered bruises and two settlers were detained by police. In related news of the same day, it was reported that Palestinians held a peaceful demonstration protesting the beginning of infrastructure work on a 500-dunum site slated to become Kiryat Arba's new industrial zone. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 13 May)

72. On 12 May, a group of settlers from Yitzhar set up a tent on a hilltop in Asira Qibliya, South of Nablus, in preparation for a new settlement. The same day, villagers from Shiyoukh and Sair organized a sit-in-strike on their land which is under threat of confiscation. The Israeli plan is to build an industrial area on 10,000 dunums of land as part of the Kiryat Arba settlement. Hundreds of trees have been uprooted south-west of Nablus to build a new bypass road. Bulldozers from the Kiryat Sepher settlement began razing land in the village of Deir Qdis in the Ramallah district. Palestinian villagers say that the settlers are planning to seize 1,000 dunums of agricultural land. Israeli bulldozers also razed land in different parts of Nablus district. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 14 May)

73. On 13 May, 11 Palestinians and three border policemen were injured during clashes that erupted near the new Kiryat Arba industrial zone when Palestinians protested work being carried out on the site. It was reported that IDF troops dispersed the Palestinians with tear gas and rubber bullets. At Bruchin, the recently established encampment near the Palestinian village of Burkin, Israeli workers were stoned by Palestinians. According to an IDF spokesperson, the site contained 15 trailers considered legal because they were within the settlement's planning scheme. (*Jerusalem Post*, 14 May)

74. On 14 May, in an attempt to prevent any further expansion in settlements on Palestinian land, it was reported that hundreds of Palestinians, blocked a road where trucks loaded with construction material were trying to enter Gaza and reach the Jewish settlements there. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 14 May)

75. On 18 May, the Palestinian leadership welcomed Ehud Barak's victory and said it expected the newly elected Government to stop settlement activities, begin implementing the Wye River agreement and accelerate the talks on the final status of the Palestinian land. Barak told his supporters in his first speech after the announcement of the results that Jerusalem will remain undivided, that Israel will not return to the 1967 borders and that most settlements will stay under the sovereignty of Israel. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 21 May)

76. On 18 May, Ateret Cohanim Society leaders sent their bulldozers to Ras Al Amud and their contractors intensified work on Jebel Abu Ghneim in East Jerusalem. The head of the Society was quoted as saying: "What we are doing is legal. We have permits to construct but we postponed the construction until after the Israeli elections. If Barak is serious about his slogan that Jerusalem will remain under Israel's sovereignty, he will not stop the work." (*The Jerusalem Times*, 21 May)

77. On 20 May, it was reported that 2 days earlier, police had arrested 5 settlers who tried to rebuild a hilltop outpost near the Shvut Rahel settlement in Samaria (northern West Bank). The Civil Administration forced the settlers off the outpost the week earlier and issued an injunction prohibiting any further work on the site. (*Ha'aretz*, 20 May)

78. On 21 May, it was reported that settlers from the Kochav Ya'cov settlement in Kufr Aqab village had seized 500 dunums of land. The Israeli High Court issued orders preventing bulldozers from razing Palestinian land in the Shuyukh and Sair villages in Hebron. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 21 May)

79. On 23 May, it was reported that the Palestinian Authority had issued a statement on its reaction to the 17 May Israeli elections. According to the statement, the Palestinian Authority expects the new Israeli Government under Barak to halt the spread of Jewish settlements, starting with Har Homa and Ras Al Amud Jewish building projects in the Jerusalem area. The Palestinian Authority also expects, the halting of Jewish settlement construction in the Nablus and Bethlehem areas, and in the Gaza Strip. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 May)

80. On 25 May, it was revealed that the Civil Administration in the West Bank had begun marking new municipal boundaries for Kiryat Arba, including land claimed by Palestinians as being previously declared to be beyond the settlement's municipal boundaries. The Palestinians who claim ownership of the land and their Israeli lawyer have denounced the Administration's action as "a surrender to settler pressure to railroad the measure, in order to increase Kiryat Arba's land reserves prior to [Prime Minister-elect] Barak's Government taking office". The Palestinians claiming ownership, including the Hebron Teachers Association, purchased the land in 1976 and planned to build a new neighbourhood on the property. In related news, it was reported that Peace Now stated that three new encampments had recently been established in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 25 May)

81. On 25 May, Peace Now called on Prime Minister-elect Barak to dismantle all illegal settlements established under former Prime Minister Netanyahu. A Peace Now spokesperson stated that three new settlements had been established since the election. Peace Now also maintained that settlers had continued building during the previous two weeks at three other illegal encampments established since the Wye accords. A spokesperson for the Civil Administration denied that any of the settlements were illegal, with the exception of one (four caravans set up on Hilltop 777 in Itamar). (*Jerusalem Post*, 26 May)

82. On 27 May, Israeli police violently pushed some 80 Palestinian and Peace Now demonstrators out of the Jewish construction site in Jerusalem's Palestinian neighbourhood of Ras Al Amud, after they entered the open gate of the 16-dunum (four acre) site. Construction on the site had begun the previous week, a day after Netanyahu was defeated in the elections by Barak. Police attacked the protesters with sticks and fists to force them out of the compound where 132 apartments were being built. They dragged away women, put some men in strangleholds, and beat others. Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi decried the police action; "They take our land, beat us up, and say they want peace. The bulldozers are burying the peace." (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 28 May)

83. On 27 May, Israeli mounted police and special anti-riot squads roughed up about 70 protesters, including PLO Executive Committee member Faisal Husseini and Peace Now activists, at the gate of the Ras Al Amud settlement. The protesters were trying to stop bulldozers from working on the construction of 132 housing units in the heart of the Arab neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. A female reporter working for Egyptian Nile TV was arrested for refusing to move back. Legislator Ahmad Batsh was slightly injured in his left hand and neck after being violently pushed. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 28 May)

84. On 28 May, it was revealed that in an attempt to create a continuous swathe of Israeli territory East of Jerusalem, Defence Minister Arens had approved a master plan connecting the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim with Jerusalem. The plan, expected to draw severe opposition from the Palestinian Authority, connects the area west of Ma'aleh Adumim with unpopulated lands near the East Jerusalem villages of Al Zaim and Isawiyah. It will increase the municipal territory of Ma'aleh Adumim by some 10,000 dunums (2,500 acres). (*Ha'aretz*, 28 March)

85. On 28 May, it was revealed that the Civil Administration office responsible for planning and building in the occupied territories had been expediting building plans for the West Bank settlements in order to obtain approval for their implementation in advance of the imminent change in government. According to *Ha'aretz*, the expected approval of 15 to 20 building projects at the Supreme Planning Council was done as a departure from accepted procedures, according to which planners are asked to make technical adjustments to the plans before they receive formal approval. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 May)

86. On 29 May, it was reported that despite Palestinian outrage and United States condemnation, Prime Minister-elect Barak declined to comment over the weekend on the Government's decision to enlarge the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim by some 10 km^2. The expansion would bring Ma'aleh Adumim to the border of Jerusalem, and cut into disputed land meant to be discussed in final status talks. Defence Minister Arens approved the master plan to add some 2,500 acres to the municipal jurisdiction of Ma'aleh

Adumim. The plan was originally drafted during Yitzhak Rabin's term as Prime Minister. With a population of about 25,000, Ma'aleh Adumim is the largest Jewish settlement in the West Bank. The land taken for the expansion of Ma'aleh Adumim was the only reserve land that remained for five Palestinian villages: A-Zaim, Azariyah, Isawiyah, Abu Dis and Anata. The municipal jurisdiction of Ma'aleh Adumim stands now on 5,300 km^2, while the municipal jurisdictions of Azariyah, Abu Dis and Anata altogether comprise only 460 km^2. These three villages are populated by 40,000 people. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 30 May)

87. On 3 June, it was reported that some 700 out of 840 apartments approved for construction at the controversial Har Homa site in South-East Jerusalem were sold, mostly to associations affiliated with right wing political parties. A total of 6,500 housing units were approved by the Government for construction at Har Homa. As Interior Minister in the late Yitzhak Rabin's Government, Prime Minister-elect Barak, had signed the authorizations for construction at the site. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 June)

88. On 2 June, Palestinian leaders prepared Arab and international opinion for possible bloodshed during the 3 June "Day of Anger" protest against settlement activities, stressing that Israel will be to blame for any violence. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 3 June)

89. On 4 June, it was reported that the official Palestinian daily, Al Hayat Al Jadida, had revealed that nearly 5,000 dunums of land have been slated for confiscation for the expansion of five settlements in the Nablus district. In another development, the mayor of Deir Istiya was notified by the IDF to stop groundwork on an agricultural road. The road would have helped save land in Wadi Qana from confiscation. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 4 June)

90. On 5 June, the Palestinian Authority warned Israel's Prime Minister-elect Barak that Palestinians were losing their patience with settlement activities and might react violently if they continue. "Settlement aggression will push the already fragile situation to the edge of an explosion", the Palestinian Authority stated after its weekly cabinet meeting. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 June)

91. On 6 June, it was reported that the 11-page draft coalition guideline document of the new Israeli Government included paragraphs on a number of subjects, including the peace process. The document was general in nature, without detailing either specific action to be taken or specific goals. The document's more salient points include the following: (a) Palestinians — the Government will accelerate the peace process with the Palestinians in order to reach a final agreement, which will be put to a referendum — the Government will honour agreements already made with the Palestinians; (b) the Government will resume negotiations with Syria, and any peace agreement will be put to a referendum; (c) Jerusalem will remain in its entirety the united capital of Israel; (d) until a final status agreement is reached, no new settlement will be established. The Government will meet the ongoing development needs of existing settlements. Except for security needs, settlements will not be entitled to preferential distribution of state funds. Funding will be based on socio-economic needs on the same grounds as in the rest of the country. A ministerial committee will examine policy towards the settlements and discuss decisions of previous Governments. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 6 June)

92. On 6 June, it was reported that settlers attacked the recently published policy guidelines of Prime Minister-elect Barak's prospective coalition, accusing him of attempting to exclude them from the national consensus. Settlement leaders stated that instead of promoting unity, the guidelines will prevent dialogue because they intend to harm the status of Jewish communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to reports, the guidelines call for suspending all preferential economic treatment currently enjoyed by residents of the West Bank and Gaza settlements, pending the results of final status talks. In the interim, no new settlements are to be established but existing ones were not to be harmed. Removing preferential treatment would mean that residents would no longer enjoy such benefits as special tax breaks and low interest and mortgage rates. However, in matters pertaining to settlement security needs, preferential treatment was to continue. It was also reported that a special ministerial committee was to be established to discuss the expansion needs of individual communities and whether to approve construction. The Mayor of the Ma'aleh Adumim settlement, Benny Kashriel, Deputy Council Chairman, stated he had written to Barak asking him to maintain the status quo for at least the next two years. Kashriel stated that Council members had advised the larger right-wing parties not to join Barak's prospective coalition if the guidelines were not amended. (*Jerusalem Post*, 7 June)

93. On 8 June, it was reported that the Palestinian Authority Planning and International Cooperation Minister, Nabil Shaath, stated that the Palestinian definition of a freeze on construction in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is that no building whatsoever should take place. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, this was a definition that Barak could not accept. "He has to freeze settlements and that is really the first sign of good will", Shaath stated. "If this new government seriously wants to finish its [final status] negotiations in a year's time, there is [already] enough room

in the present settlements for so-called natural growth." (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 June)

94. On 11 June, it was reported that the Israeli Prime Minister-elect Barak had pledged to prevent settlers from occupying the hills in the West Bank. Barak is reported to have said he will reconsider the decisions taken by the former Government to expand settlements, even if such a reconsideration renders him unable to form a coalition with the parties which support settlement expansion. The Government nonetheless said that all of Jerusalem will remain the permanent, united capital under Israeli sovereignty. Barak's aides said that no new settlements will be constructed until the status of the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) is determined. Meanwhile, the existing settlements will not be dismantled. The new set of policies does not include any promise not to expand the existing settlements. Economic incentives for the settlements will be cancelled. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 11 June)

95. On 15 June, it was reported that Prime Minister-elect Barak had reached an agreement with the National Religious Party (NRP), during talks to form a new coalition, to not stand in the way of a plan to connect the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim with Jerusalem. The oral agreement also contained a promise to continue building in East Jerusalem's Har Homa neighbourhood. However, Barak refused to make any promises regarding construction of a Jewish neighbourhood at Ras Al Amud. The oral commitments concerning Ma'aleh Adumim and Har Homa will not be included in the coalition platform, nor will they be included in the coalition agreement with the NRP, as neither Barak nor the NRP want the agreement publicized at this stage. The coalition platform states only that "building in Jerusalem will continue for the benefit of all its inhabitants". The Har Homa project was originally approved by Labour Party Jerusalem Mayor Kollek, while tenders for building on Har Homa were issued by the Netanyahu Government. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 June)

96. On 16 June, it was reported that according to the State Comptroller report, some settlements received funding for the same projects twice: once from governmental ministries, and a second time from the World Zionist Organization's (WZO) Settlement Division. The report examined the details of government assistance for development of new settlements. In 1995, the Comptroller decided to scrutinize the WZO Settlement Division. The current report examines links among government offices, the WZO Settlement Division and the Jewish Agency's settlement division. The report also examines the duplication of funds allotted for immigration and social needs in the settlements. In 1997, the WZO allocated NIS 12.8 million for social and immigration assistance, and an additional NIS 15.2 million to voluntary organizations for community centres. At the same time, the Government continued to transfer funds designated for the same needs. Funds were distributed without any coordination, according to the report. (*Jerusalem Post*, 17 June)

97. On 16 June, Palestinian officials confirmed that the Palestinian Authority was barring Palestinians from construction work in Jewish settlements in the Gaza strip. Palestinian Justice Minister Freih Abu Meddein termed the ban a "security step". He stated that construction at settlements provokes the Palestinian public and could have dangerous consequences. Abu Meddein stated that the new policy, implemented a few days earlier, was not a result of a cabinet decision, but came rather from "leaders in the police and security forces". It does not apply to agriculture workers, he said. Referring to Israeli trucks that bring building materials to the settlement of Netzarim, Abu Meddein said "When our people look at these lorries and trucks, what kind of hope do they have? This is an invitation to violence." Palestinian sources stated that Israel was planning to confiscate 8,000 dunums (km^2) in 12 Palestinian villages in the North of the West Bank, in order to expand the settlements of Alon Moreih, Shello, Rachel, Yitzhar and Itamar. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 17 and 20 June)

98. On 18 June, President Clinton decided to delay moving the United States embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, declaring the delay necessary in order to "... protect the national security interests of the United States" and preserve the chances for an Israeli-Palestinian peace. Prime Minister-elect Barak did not comment, but outgoing Prime Minister Netanyahu's communications adviser, David Bar Ilan, stated that he is certain the Clinton administration would eventually recognize an undivided Jerusalem as Israel's capital. "Jerusalem is now and will remain Israel's undivided capital. This is the consensus in Israel, which includes practically all members of the new government as well as the outgoing government. We are certain that the Administration will follow the lead of Congress", he stated. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20 June)

99. On 24 June, it was reported that Hassan Asfour, a leading peace negotiator, had stated that the Palestinians intended to reach an agreement with Israel on the principles of a peace deal before the beginning of detailed negotiations. "The goal is to reach an agreement with the Israelis and then continue the discussion on Jerusalem, refugees, water, and borders", stated Asfour, head of PLO's Negotiation Affairs Department, during a panel discussion at Bir Zeit University. A major criticism levelled against Palestinian Authority negotiators, voiced at Bir Zeit, had been that the Oslo

process had failed to freeze settlement activity and, in fact, deferred the issue for five years, during which Israel continued to build and confiscate land. The Oslo accords are vague about how the final status talks are to be structured, stating only that "... it is understood that these negotiations shall cover remaining issues, including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbours and other issues of common interest." (*Jerusalem Post*, 24 June)

100. On 6 July, it was reported that new government guidelines relating to political-diplomatic processes stressed the need to accelerate negotiations with the Palestinians in order to reach final status arrangements. The guidelines called for the principle of reciprocity to be maintained, saying that the Government will abide by previous agreements as long as the Palestinians do the same. Under the guidelines, the Government will also try to resume negotiations with Syrians in order to reach a peace agreement. The guidelines state that such an arrangement would be presented for a referendum. However, the guidelines state clearly that Jerusalem will remain the undivided capital of Israel. Concerning settlements in "Judea, Samaria and Gaza", the guidelines state that no new settlements will be built before the final status arrangements have been made, but existing settlements will not be harmed. However, the Government is to reconsider the national priority status given to certain areas and settlements in "Judea, Samaria and Gaza" will be given equal status to those within the Green Line, except for preferential treatment of security needs. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 July)

101. On 10 July, it was reported that the Housing Ministry had published a bid for the construction of 589 housing units in the ultra-orthodox settlement of Bitar Elit near Jerusalem, beyond the Green Line. Peace Now called upon Barak to freeze construction on the site. The Bitar Elit settlement currently has some 13,000 inhabitants. (*Ha'aretz*, 11 July)

102. On 11 July, it was reported that a fourth Jewish family was slated to move into the Shimon Hatsadik neighbourhood in the heart of East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah area. Shimon Hatsadik was given a "new Jewish neighbourhood" status by former Deputy Minister of Housing, Meir Prosh, during his last month in office. The new status means that the Housing Ministry will pay NIS 400,000 annually in private security services for protecting the residents of the neighbourhood. The family slated to move in was to be given the ninth apartment in the neighbourhood. Most of the other apartments provide lodging for single men. This is not the only neighbourhood to receive from the previous Government the status of a new Jewish stronghold in East Jerusalem. Silwan, Ras Al Amud, Beit Orot and the Muslim Quarter of the Old City all enjoy this special status, and the benefits from the Housing Ministry that go with it. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 July)

103. On 13 July, it was reported that the newly appointed Industry and Trade Minister, Ran Cohen, had instructed his Ministry to freeze all government investment in factories in the West Bank and Gaza. He explained that investments approved between January 1995 and January 1998 — for which payments were not yet completed — would not be frozen. The freeze applies only to investment applications dated thereafter. Cohen stated that there was no reason for his Ministry to invest millions of shekels beyond the Green Line, when there were over 200,000 unemployed citizens within Israel. He added that he intended to divert the investments to peripheral development areas. Finance Minister Avraham Shohat stated in response that decisions regarding the national priorities map were to be made at a meeting with the Prime Minister and himself, as was the case in 1992. (*Ha'aretz*, 13 July)

104. On 13 July, it was reported that settler leaders had agreed the day before, during a meeting with Prime Minister Barak, to refrain from establishing new encampments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was also agreed that both sides, the Government and the settlers, would refrain from taking unilateral actions. Settler leader Benny Kashriel stated that Barak had promised to investigate statements by Minister of Industry and Trade Ran Cohen, in which Cohen called for a freeze on financial assistance to industrial parks in the West Bank settlements. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 13 July)

105. On 14 July, the Minister-in-Charge of Jerusalem Affairs Haim Ramon stated in the Knesset that building plans for a Jewish neighbourhood at Ras Al Amud cannot be allowed to be implemented since they discriminate against the Arab residents of Jerusalem. "If we don't maintain equal policies in Jerusalem we are undermining our hold and our struggle to maintain Jerusalem's unity under Israeli sovereignty", he stated. "We cannot have policies that discriminate between Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, and the entire Ras Al Amud plan is clear, severe discrimination between Jews and Arabs." Ramon added that former Prime Minister Netanyahu also felt the plan was bad. Citing a 1997 letter from Netanyahu to United States president Clinton, Ramon quoted Netanyahu as saying that "neither families nor a neighbourhood" should be situated there since it is not good for the unity of Jerusalem. However, according to Ramon, Netanyahu backed down "due to pressure from extremists". At the same time, Ramon stated that building would proceed at Har Homa, according to a plan under

which one third of the homes would be built for Arab residents. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 15 July)

106. On 15 July, it was reported that Education Minister Yossi Sarid was planning to re-examine criteria for granting fee exemption to pupils in settlements. "All communities in Israel and over the Green Line will face the same criteria characterized by equality, fairness and complete clarity", Sarid stated. "Any settlement whose situation is like that of Kiryat Shmona, Hatzor, Shlomi, Ofakim, Netivot, Yeroham, Kiryat Gat ... or many other places are eligible to receive the exemption in accordance with the law. Settlements that are more like the better off, well established, and strong communities in Israel are not entitled to receive it", Sarid added. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 16 July)

107. On 15 July, a United Nations conference to examine whether settlements in the occupied territories violate international law was adjourned after little more than half an hour, with agreement that it will reconvene only if the situation on the ground flares up. The Swiss-chaired conference was attended by 103 nations. It unanimously approved a text stating that a key part of the Geneva Conventions on the conduct of war is applicable to "... the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem". Israel and the United States, which argued the meeting was harmful to the peace process, boycotted the session. The meeting adjourned almost immediately. "Taking into consideration the improved atmosphere in the Middle East as a whole, the conference was adjourned on the understanding it will convene again in the light of consultations on the development of the humanitarian situation in the field", read a consensus statement. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 16 July)

108. On 23 July, it was reported that the position of Israeli Prime Minister Barak on the future of the settlements on occupied Arab land was received with reserve and apprehension by the Palestinian and Egyptian parties. Barak had made no statement in Washington pledging to put an end to settlement construction on these lands. Barak proposed to bypass the Wye River memorandum and begin the final status talks instead. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 July)

109. On 26 July, it was reported that Prime Minister Barak had issued an order to dismantle five caravans placed illegally on a hilltop two km from the settlement of Shavut Rahel in the West Bank. It was the first time such action had been taken by the new Barak Government. Of some 30 encampments (according to *Ha'aretz* more than 40) set up on hilltops during the Netanyahu Government, four are considered illegal by Civil Administration officials, one of them Shvut Rahel. The fate of the others has yet to be determined. A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said that the establishments violated an agreement between Barak and the leaders of the Council of Jewish Communities in the West Bank and Gaza who promised to refrain from carrying out any unilateral activity and to coordinate all their moves with the Government. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 26 July)

110. On 28 July, it was reported that the Palestinians had suspended security coordination and joint patrols with the Israelis at Bethlehem to protest what they said was illegal construction at Rachel's Tomb, outside the city. IDF denied allegations that the construction was damaging a Moslem cemetery. An IDF spokesperson stated that the work was aimed at improving security arrangements at the tomb and was taking place in Area C, which is under full Israeli control. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 July)

111. On 5 August, it was reported that the fate of 31 hilltop encampments established throughout the West Bank since 1996 had yet to be determined. A week earlier, settler leaders claimed that OC Central Command Major-General Moshe Ya'alon had stated in a meeting with members of the Jewish Settlers Council in the West Bank that IDF would not dismantle the majority of the hilltop encampments. After swift responses from the Peace Now Movement and Education Minister Yossi Sarid, an IDF spokesperson denied the reports and stated that the status of the encampments and their future was a decision for the Israeli Government and not IDF. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 4 and 5 August)

112. On 9 August, Palestinians threw stones at IDF troops outside Joseph's Tomb at Nablus after discovering illegal construction in the compound made by Yeshiva students. Joseph's Tomb is under Palestinian control but security control is entrusted to Israel at this site. Under Israeli-Palestinian interim agreements, neither side is permitted to change the arrangement. However, there are frequent complaints from both sides about violations. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 10 August)

113. On 10 August, it was reported that the Housing Ministry had issued a tender the previous week for construction of 65 apartments and a 700 m^2 commercial centre in the West Bank settlement of Ariel. Ten days earlier, the Ministry published a tender for the construction of 500 apartments in Beitar, a settlement near Jerusalem, and prior to that it published two other tenders for West Bank construction; one for another additional 589 apartments in Beitar, and one for 185 housing units in the Har Adar settlement. In total, the Ministry had published tenders for construction of 1,339 housing units in settlements since Housing Minister Levy (leader of the right-wing National

Religious Party) took office. According to Peace Now, this is equivalent to a rate of 16,000 housing units a year, more than four times the rate under the Netanyahu Government. This completely contradicts the new Government's policies, the Movement charged. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 10 and 11 August)

114. On 12 August, it was reported that the office of the Judge Advocate General had drafted a legal opinion stating that only 12 of the 42 satellite outposts recently erected by West Bank settlers could be defended before the High Court. The opinion was to be presented to Prime Minister Barak the following day, at the opening of the first special meeting to deal with the issue of the legal satellite outposts that have been erected by settlers over the past several months following the signing of the Wye agreement. Senior IDF sources told *Ha'aretz* that before this opinion was completed only four outposts had been considered illegal. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 August)

Roads

115. On 11 March, Palestinians complained that Jewish settlers were paving an unauthorized road through Arab-owned fields in the Hebron area with the intention of creating a shortcut between the Kiryat Arba settlement and the "Harsina" neighbourhood in Hebron. Palestinians said that the road under construction poses a threat to the land of 20 Arab families. The spokesperson for the Civil Administration, Peter Lerner, confirmed that private land was involved and said that the Civil Administration had ordered that the work on the road be stopped. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 March)

116. On 16 March, it was reported that the Israeli City Council in Jerusalem was about to destroy a 450-m road which has been recently opened by the Palestinian Authority to help the citizens of Waljeh whose lands are classified as part of Jerusalem even though they themselves are considered officially as West Bankers. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 March)

117. On 23 April, it was reported that Palestinian landowners around Kalandia airport had received notifications that their lands have been confiscated and have been given one week to oppose the seizure in court. According to the confiscation orders, tens of hectares of Palestinian land have been slated for confiscation. A new by-pass road will be constructed providing continuity to Jewish settlements and cutting off East Jerusalem from the Palestinian villages on Jerusalem's northern outskirts. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 April)

118. On 25 June, it was reported that the Israeli Prime Minister-elect Barak told the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* on 18 June that he intended to build a bridge to link the West Bank and the Gaza Strip shortly after he takes office. The four-lane bridge is to be 47 km long and is to connect the town of Beit Hanoun, just North of Gaza, with the town of Dura, South-West of Hebron. The bridge is also to carry a railway line, and the pipes for a water network. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 25 June)

119. On 2 July, it was reported that the Palestinian Authority and Israeli Government officials traded charges over an Israeli road construction project entitled "Bethlehem 2000". The plan includes widening and repairing the Bethlehem-Jerusalem road between the Gilo intersection and Rachel's Tomb, the building of an island between its two sides, installing lights and building parking lots. The most sensitive aspect of the project, in Palestinian eyes, was the enlargement of military checkpoint No. 300, where West Bank vehicles heading North are checked by Israeli security forces. The checkpoint was allegedly located on land that was part of Jordan's Bethlehem Municipality before Israel occupied and annexed it to Jerusalem in 1967. "They are trying to create facts on the ground, as they do with settlements and bypass roads", stated Jamal Salman, director of the Bethlehem Municipality. "Accepting this road plan means accepting Israel annexation", he added. A path was to be built where Palestinian labourers would walk several hundred metres before being checked by IDF soldiers, as was done at the Erez crossing point between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Another sore point was that part of the roadwork would take place well inside Bethlehem's borders (as recognized by Israel). (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 July)

120. On 5 July, the Bethlehem Popular Committee to Defend Land stated that the citizens of Bethlehem will resist the Jerusalem Municipality's attempt to seize more land in the northern part of the city. The Committee was reacting to a new Israeli project to set up a 600-m lane for pedestrians that goes from the South of the Keber Rahil shrine to Jerusalem without passing through Israeli army checkpoints. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 July)

121. On 21 July, the Civil Administration approved the construction of sections of bypass roads in the West Bank. In response, Peace Now called for the plans to be cancelled and to be tabled before a ministerial committee slated to convene the following week to discuss housing and road construction in the territories. A Peace Now spokesperson stated that the plans were related to a section of trans-Samaria highway from Tapuah Junction eastward and to two separate sections of highway 60 between Nablus and Ramallah. The spokesperson demanded to know if Prime

Minister Barak had authorized the plans, stating that Peace Now expected him to cancel them immediately. A Civil Administration spokesperson stated that the roads were approved under the former Government, adding that they were an integral part of implementation of the Wye agreement. A spokesperson for Prime Minister Barak refused to comment on the issue. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 July, *Ha'aretz*, 23 July)

Housing

122. On 4 February, the Civil Administration demolished two Palestinian-owned houses for being built "illegally". One of the houses was in Hebron, near the Kiryat Arba settlement, and the other in the nearby village of Beit Ummar. Issa Samander, a spokesperson for the Palestinian Land Defence Committee, said that the Hebron house was home to a family of 10 and belonged to a Palestinian whose brother lives with his family in a tent after their home was demolished for the third time the year before. According to Samander, the owner of the Hebron house had applied to the Civil Administration several times for a building permit but was turned down each time. A Civil Administration spokesperson confirmed the demolitions, and stated that "the actions were undertaken after we finished all the legal procedures". (*Jerusalem Post*, 5 February)

123. More than 37 houses and a mosque in the village of Walegeh are slated for demolition because they are unlicensed. The village is divided between Jerusalem and the West Bank. The mosque and about 50 houses are located in an area which has been a site of dispute and confrontation between the villagers and the Jerusalem City Council since the 1980s. The residents of Wageleh, who carry West Bank identity cards, receive municipal services from the West Bank city of Beit Jala on the basis of their West Bank identity cards. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 February)

124. Israeli settlers in Hebron were reported to be co-ordinating a new drive of construction in their area after receiving encouragement from Israeli Defence Minister Arens. In a related story, settlers from the Beit Oron Religious Institute occupied an empty house in Sheikh Jarjah on 17 February. After clashes with neighbours, the Israeli police ordered that the site be vacated pending court decision on the rightful owner. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 February)

125. On 2 March, it was reported that the Interior Ministry had issued 201 house demolition orders in 1998 for illegally erected structures in East Jerusalem, and had carried out nine of the orders, according to a government building inspector's report. Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani told the Knesset that the peace process had often prevented the police from cracking down on illegal construction in East Jerusalem. The Municipality of Jerusalem issues its own house demolition orders — separately from the Interior Ministry — and a city official stated that Jerusalem had issued 30 demolition orders in the last two weeks alone. The cost of obtaining a building permit from the city for construction in East Jerusalem comes to about NIS 130 per m^2. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (ICAHD) said that the high number of building violations in East Jerusalem evidenced Israeli discrimination in issuing permits. ICAHD also said that Jerusalem authorities manipulated zoning laws to make it difficult for Palestinian residents to build, and failed to supply Palestinian neighbourhoods with adequate infrastructure. In related news, it was reported that ICAHD was preparing to offer the Municipality of Jerusalem an alternate zoning plan for the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Jabal Mukabar. An ICAHD member stated that the city's own plan would not serve the interest of the residents adequately. Should the city accept the alternative plan, ICAHD plans to ask for all outstanding demolition orders in the area to be cancelled. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 March)

126. On 10 March, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition held a press conference in Jerusalem, at which it stated that Israelis must oppose the "perpetuation of occupation" by helping to rebuild Palestinian homes demolished by IDF and replant trees uprooted by settlers. A spokesperson for the Committee also said that Israelis should oppose new bypass roads that break up the West Bank into isolated enclaves. According to the Committee's reports, a structure of occupation, displacement and apartheid has been systematically imposed on Palestinians to ensure Israeli control. The Committee added that tens of thousands of dunums of agricultural land had been confiscated by Israeli authorities. The Committee also claimed that since 1967, 6,000 West Bank and Jerusalem Arab homes were demolished. A spokesperson for the "Civil Administration" in the West Bank confirmed that 1,300 homes had been demolished since 1990, while a Jerusalem Municipality spokesperson claimed that only 56 Arab homes had been demolished in the last five years. (*Jerusalem Post*, 11 March)

127. On 13 March, some 300 Israeli peace activists from ICAHD helped three Palestinian families at Anata, Yatat and Kafel Haris to rebuild their demolished homes. ICAHD protested what it called the Israeli policy of preventing Palestinians from obtaining building permits. This, explained ICAHD, had forced the Palestinians to build their houses without permits. Since 1967, the Committee claimed that some 6,000 West Bank and Gaza houses had been

demolished because they were built illegally, which was clear evidence that people had to break the law in order to ensure their basic right to housing. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 14 March)

128. On 19 April, it was reported that two illegally built houses at Issawiyah had been demolished. An unfinished house was also knocked down. "There were no building permits for any one of them and they were also built on land slated for public use", stated a spokesperson for the Jerusalem Municipality, which authorized the demolitions. "Most of the village doesn't have permits. They issue requests but they are never accepted by the Israeli authorities", stated Issawiyah resident Atef Abed, explaining the illegal construction. Peace Now criticized the demolitions, charging that they were politically motivated. The Gush Shalom Movement stated that "Binyamin Netanyahu is cynically waging an election campaign on the backs of unfortunate Palestinians whose homes were destroyed ... in order to win more votes from the extreme right." In 1998, 12 houses were demolished in East Jerusalem and 13 in the western part of the city. To date in 1999, 26 demolition orders had been issued in East Jerusalem, of which seven have been executed. In West Jerusalem, one of the two buildings slated for demolition has been torn down. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 20 April)

129. On 19 April, Israeli bulldozers demolished two houses in Jerusalem's Issawiya village as well as a third house under construction. The houses were built without Israeli-issued permits on land classified as "green land". Nature preserve authorities have instructed a Palestinian family living in a container near the Jewish settlement of Emmanuel in the West Bank to remove the caravan. Five more families have received notification that their homes will be destroyed because they have been constructed without permits. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 April)

130. On 20 April, the Israeli police implemented an Israeli High Court ruling and evicted a family from part of its house in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, in an ongoing legal controversy between Palestinians and Jewish settlers. The eviction was resisted by the Kurd family. Palestinians accused the Israeli police of allowing settlers to enter and use the property under dispute. One Palestinian woman was slightly injured and a man was arrested. Settlers claim ownership to 18 dunums of land at Sheikh Jarrah, where 27 houses were constructed in 1953. About 700 people live in the houses. Settlers claim that the land is Jewish property from before 1948. Palestinians counterclaim that it is their land. Both sides are supplying documents to prove the claims. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 April)

131. On 25 April, it was reported that several students from the Beit Orot Yeshiva had reoccupied a house near the tomb of Shimon Hatzaddik in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. The previous week, the High Court ordered that the house in which an Arab family had been living remain empty, although Beit Orot stated that it is Jewish property. (*Jerusalem Post*, 26 April)

132. On 3 May, two Palestinian homes were demolished in the Jebel Al Mokaber neighbourhood of Jerusalem, despite a recent unofficial agreement between the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and the City of Jerusalem to temporarily halt house demolitions. The Interior Ministry ordered that the homes of cousins Jamal and Jamil Souri be bulldozed. The two demolished homes had been constructed without building permits. (*Ha'aretz*, 4 May)

133. On 3 May, the Israeli authorities demolished two Arab-owned houses in East Jerusalem. The houses were owned by Jalila Surri and her brother Jamal Surri from Jebel Al Mokaber. Ten other houses in East Jerusalem and 10 more in the West Bank have also been demolished since the beginning of this year. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 May)

134. On 6 May, it was reported that the Jerusalem Municipality and representatives of residents of East Jerusalem neighbourhoods Jebel Al Mokaber and Arab El Suwahara had arrived at a "gentleman's agreement" to temporarily halt house demolitions and illegal construction in the city. The East Jerusalem residents were represented by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and a team of architects and city planners. The parties decided that no homes would be destroyed and no structures would be erected without permits, until planning teams from both sides had examined the city's existing zoning plans. Despite the agreement, two Jerusalem homes were demolished on 3 May. The City of Jerusalem stated that the Interior Ministry was responsible for the demolitions, which could have been avoided. (*Ha'aretz*, 6 May)

135. On 9 May, the Israeli Government approved a controversial plan to allocate approximately $100 million for settlement activities in East Jerusalem, offering financial incentives to those who buy an apartment there. A deputy of the Israeli Housing Minister reportedly told the Israeli newspaper, *Ma'ariv*, that the Israeli Committee to Support Jerusalem had decided to pay $6,500 for every Israeli buying an Arab house in the city. Those who will buy apartments in Jebel Abu Ghneim will also benefit from this incentive. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 and 12 May)

136. On 13 May, the Civil Administration ordered the demolition of four "illegally" built structures, two in the

village of Yatta and two at Bani Na'im near Hebron. (*Jerusalem Post*, 14 May)

137. On 22 June, it was reported that Attorney Bilha Berg claimed that the Interior Ministry's order for the destruction of an illegal structure in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of West A-Sawahra was in direct contravention of an agreement between the Ministry and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. Berg claimed that Mati Houta, Planning Director at the Interior Ministry, had arrived at an agreement with the Jerusalem Municipality in which houses in both Jebel Al Mokaber and West A-Sawahra would not be destroyed without prior discussion among planning teams on both sides and neighbourhood residents. The Interior Ministry issued a statement claiming that the illegal structure was only a basement and floor, and therefore uninhabited, and that the agreement with Houta dealt only with Jebel Al Mokaber. Berg disputed the Ministry's statement. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 June)

138. On 7 June, the Israeli authorities demolished a two-story house owned by Mohammed Abu Khdeir at Shufat. Abu Khdeir had applied for a license but his application was rejected. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 11 June)

139. On 27 July, it was reported that Internal Security Minister Shlomo Ben Ami had instructed police to inform him personally before demolishing any Arab houses. Ben Ami told *Ha'aretz* that over the last 30 years, 35,000 housing units had been constructed for Jews in East Jerusalem but none for Palestinians. Ben Ami stated "We should be sensitive to the factors which led to illegal building." In related news, it was reported that both Ben Ami and Yossi Beilin, the Justice Minister, held a joint meeting with members of their staff to discuss the problem of illegal construction. A Justice Ministry spokesperson stated that it was a learning experience for the two Ministers, who listened rather than talked. The discussion covered illegal building in areas such as East Jerusalem and the occupied territories. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 27, 29 July)

140. On 11 August, it was reported that the Interior Ministry had demolished the houses of two Palestinian families in Jerusalem's Walaje neighbourhood, near the Gilo settlement, prompting violence among the local Palestinian population. The Interior Ministry's Jerusalem District Commissioner, Mati Houta, stated that there was no way to build legally in Walaje. Houta said that instead of building the house in Walaje, the owners should have bought an apartment in Sur Bahir (a nearby Arab neighbourhood). Walaje residents live inside the borders of Jerusalem as defined by Israel after the Six Day War, but were never accorded Jerusalem identity cards by the Interior Ministry. Instead, they carry identity cards from the Civil Administration in the West Bank. The owners of the demolished houses would not be able to move to Sur Bahir because they do not have a Jerusalem residency card, Houta conceded, when queried about the feasibility of his suggestion. He said that the lack of Jerusalem residency status for Walaje residents was "a mistake which needed to be solved and indicated that the matter was being handled". The Prime Minister's Office declined to comment specifically on the demolitions. It said: "There is no policy of destroying homes. Every case is checked individually." (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 August)

141. On 16 August, Internal Security Minister Shlomo Ben Ami expressed firm opposition to the demolition of homes built without permits, saying that the police should be stopped and a "comprehensive solution" to the problem found. "I oppose with all my soul the destruction of homes and I believe this should be stopped and a comprehensive solution found", Ben Ami said in response to a protest filed by the Gush Shalom movement after two homes were destroyed in the Walaje neighbourhood in southern Jerusalem the week before. He added that he and Justice Minister Yossi Beilin had formed a committee to discuss the issue. He said that he felt that there should be a way for those who had built, because they could not get permits, to get construction approved retroactively. (*Jerusalem Post*, 17 August)

142. On 19 August, it was reported that two Palestinian brothers from the Jerusalem neighbourhood Walaje had been served with orders from the Interior Ministry to halt construction of new homes they began building shortly after ministry bulldozers demolished their houses the week before. The two brothers had been living with their families in tents since the houses they were living in for four months were demolished. Mati Houta, Jerusalem District Commissioner for the Interior Ministry, stated that he "very much hoped" that the new building sites will be demolished. The land of Walaje was annexed to Jerusalem in 1967, but its residents were never granted identity cards, apparently out of fear that doing so would impact on the demographic balance between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem. Spokesperson for the Internal Security Minister Shlomo Ben Ami stated that Ben Ami's stated opposition the week before did not mean that he could stand in the way of court orders to demolish houses. In this case, the spokesperson stated, the Palestinian brothers had violated the law twice. (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 August)

Water

143. On 2 March, Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian water specialists, joined by American scientists, issued a report

which they hoped will promote regional cooperation in grappling with the worsening problem of water scarcity. The report was delicate in its treatment of the fact that per capita use of water in Israel is more than three times that in the West Bank and Gaza Strip — 344 m^3 per year compared with 94 m^3 year. One of the concerns for future generations, stated the report, will be "achieving greater equity in the distribution of water throughout the area". (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 March)

144. On 26 March, it was reported that the water crisis in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will be severe this year as a result of rain shortage. Palestinian officials are predicting that remote villages in the north and south of the West Bank will suffer a great deal. This year, the Israelis provided permits to the Palestinian Authority to drill 15 artesian wells, each 800 m deep, in the southern West Bank. Though the water pumped will provide drinking water for Hebron, Bethlehem and scorched villages in the area, nearly one third of it will be used by settlers. The remaining water will not be sufficient for agriculture, environment and industry. The Palestinians are not allowed to dig artesian wells in the north of the West Bank because they pump water from the northern and western aquifers. Israel sells 13 million m^3 of water to the West Bank for drinking purposes, 10 million m^3 short of the quantity needed to solve the crisis. Palestinians pay more for the water than the Israeli consumer because the Palestinian Authority does not subsidize its water supplies while the Israeli Government does. According to water expert Ihab Barghouti, some 166 villages in the West Bank have not been linked to the water pipes system. The crisis is much more severe in the Gaza Strip because the annual rainfall there is even lower than in the West Bank. Moreover, the quality of the water in Gaza's aquifers is compromised as salt water from the sea flows into it and mixes with the fresh water. Israel has also been supplying Jordan with 20 million m^3 of water from lake Tiberias, as stipulated in their peace treaty. As a result, Israel has decided to cut this supply by 35 per cent, starting a crisis with Jordan. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 26 March)

145. On 19 May, Israeli authorities demolished several water reservoirs built by Palestinians in the Hebron area. According to Civil Administration spokespersons, the reservoirs had been constructed without permits. The families who constructed the reservoirs complained that they had no other reliable supply of water and need the reservoirs for private use. "This is unfair", said Kayed Jaber, owner of one of the reservoirs. "We suffer from a water shortage, we don't have drinking water, and the settlers take our share to fill their swimming pools." Jeff Halper of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) tried to prevent the demolition and was arrested. Rabbi Eric Asherman, another activist of ICAHD, stated that he anticipated a wave of home demolitions in the coming weeks. Four homes in the area of Yatta were destroyed by the Civil Administration during the previous week. (*Ha'aretz*, 20 May)

146. On 28 May, it was reported that the head of the Palestinian Water Authority, Khairy Al Jamal, had accused Israel of cutting off water supplies to hundreds of thousands of people living in the Gaza Strip. The salinity rate has increased as a result of Israeli over-pumping water. The water shortage is even more acute due to low rainfall. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 28 May)

147. On 1 July, activists from the human rights organization B'Tselem protested the water shortage in the Beit Fouriq village east of Nablus in the occupied territories. The village, inhabited by 8,000 people, was one of 180 villages around the West Bank and Gaza Strip that was not connected to any kind of water distribution network. While the nearby Jewish settlements of Alon Moreh and Etamar were connected to water distribution networks. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 July)

148. On 9 July, it was reported that a study conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights revealed that the residents of the 19 Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip consume 30 million ft^3 of Palestinian water annually, compared to an average yearly consumption of 110-130 million m^3 by residents of the Strip over the last five years. The Water Authority estimated that in 1996, the 5,000 settlers in the area used up to a quarter of the total consumption of the one-and-a-half million inhabitants of the Strip. Average consumption of water in the Gaza Strip is one of the lowest in the region; individual consumption averaged 70 l per day in 1996, compared to 140 l in Jordan and 280 l in Israel. In a related development, Bedouin families and Palestinian farmers are reported to be severely suffering from the consequences of this year's drought. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 July)

2. Restrictions affecting movement of Palestinians within, between, and their exit from and re-entry into the occupied territories

149. On 14 February, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Sabri Akrama, accused Israel of trying to banish him from the city. Akrama said that the Israeli Police had notified the Waqf (Muslim Religious Trust) that henceforth he would be barred from his Jerusalem office. Akrama rejected what he called intervention by right-wing Israeli extremists in Muslims' religious affairs. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 February)

150. On 16 February, it was reported that Israel had asked Dennis Ross, the United States Special Middle East Peace Envoy, to use American influence to prevent the Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Sabri Akrama, from moving his office from the Old City to Al Aqsa Mosque compound. A few months earlier, construction began of new offices in the Al Aqsa compound, where Akrama is expected to move. According to Israeli officials, his aides had already moved there. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, Sabri said that he would not budge from the new office in the Dome of the Rock compound. "I will not leave it. We are not accepting the Israeli interpretation. They distort the facts." David Bar Illan, director of communications for Prime Minister Netanyahu, termed Akrama's relocations as a "breaking of the status quo". (*Ha'aretz*, 16 February, *Jerusalem Post*, 17 February)

Identity cards, travel permits

151. On 3 February, it was revealed that the Israeli authorities had prevented the Palestinian Authority from receiving two armoured cars, both of which had been purchased for President Arafat's personal use. The cars arrived at the Rafah checkpoint several weeks earlier. Under various agreements concluded between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Israel was entitled to search the cars before allowing their entrance into the Gaza Strip. According to Israeli sources, IDF officers were surprised to discover that the two cars were equipped with advanced electronic equipment for neutralizing side-bombs. (*Ha'aretz*, 4 February)

152. On 7 February, it was reported that transportation experts from Egypt, the Palestinian Authority and Israel meeting the week before had disagreed about air approach routes to the Gaza airport. Air transport to the Yasser Arafat International Airport is routed over the northern Sinai Egyptian town of El Arish. The Palestinians expressed concern over the inadequate security in the area. The Israelis countered that any change in the route would complicate the Israel Air Force's training regimen. Both sides agreed to meet again to try to reach a solution. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 February)

153. On 17 February, thousands of students at Palestinian universities and colleges went on an hour-long strike in support of students from the Gaza Strip enrolled at West Bank universities. Only 292 students out of 1,400 have been given permits to enter Israel on their way to the West Bank universities. Fifty-two of the permits were given to sons and daughters of Palestinian officials and personalities who have VIP cards allowing them free movement. Some students have gone through Egypt and Jordan to arrive at their colleges in the West Bank. There was a tremendous decline in the number of students from Gaza studying in the West Bank in the last year, with only 358 able to attend classes. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 February)

154. On 26 February, it was reported that the Israeli Interior Ministry will defend its policy of revoking East Jerusalem identity cards by introducing a new plan. Palestinian lawyer Suhad Agha said that the new tactics are internal measures practised by the Israeli National Insurance Institution and are not yet laws. According to a report released by Orient House, East Jerusalem citizens will be divided into five categories:

(a) Those living within the borders of the city and included in the 1968 census have permanent status and will enjoy full social benefits. Their number is estimated at 50,000. These are the ones who will receive Israeli magnetic cards;

(b) Those who possess Israeli identity cards but live on the outskirts of Jerusalem are denied social benefits. They can keep their Israeli-issued identity cards which will serve as passes to enter Israel. It is a category comprising 80,000 people;

(c) Those who came to live in Jerusalem as a result of family reunion can get residence rights for five years and three months. His or her temporary residence status will be cancelled if they commit security offences. It is up to the Israeli Government to grant them permanent status after the five years. They have no entitlement to social benefits;

(d) People who live in the West Bank and have access to their homes through Jerusalem will be given special identification that will help them leave and enter their neighbourhoods. They are not citizens and enjoy no benefit but they have to pay taxes on their property;

(e) The population in the fifth category includes those who live in the West Bank villages surrounding Jerusalem. They will be given permits to enter Jerusalem only. They are under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority but their villages will remain under the control of Israel.

The Israeli authorities will conduct a census within Jerusalem city limits before the end of 1999. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 26 February)

155. On 2 March 1999, a spokeswoman for the Israeli Ministry of the Interior justified the withdrawal in 1998 of 788 identity cards from Jerusalemite Palestinians on the grounds that the holders were living outside Jerusalem city limits. Human rights organizations described Israel's action as a "silent transfer". (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 March)

156. On 6 March, a Palestinian woman was detained for questioning during a confrontation at the A-Ram junction on the northern boundary of Jerusalem, where about 50 Palestinian women tried to push their way past the checkpoint in an attempt to enter the city. Police pushed back the demonstrators, who were attending a rally organized by Palestinian Authority legislator Hanan Ashrawi to protest the refusal of Israeli authorities to grant them entry permits. "This is a symbolic protest against all repressive Israeli measures such as their continued occupation of Jerusalem and stripping Palestinians from their Jerusalem residency permits and the closure", said Amal Khreished, a leading member of the Palestinian Women's Federation. Ashrawi claimed that police had used brute force to disperse the demonstrators and had beaten them in some cases. (*Jerusalem Post*, 7 March)

157. On 11 March, IDF reopened to Palestinian traffic the road passing below the Jewish Tel Rumeida neighbourhood in Hebron. It had been closed since a shooting incident there in September 1998. A settlers' spokesperson said that settlers will continue pressuring the Government to close the road to Palestinian traffic, claiming that the opening of the road will threaten security. A senior IDF officer told *Ha'aretz* that the road was closed in September as "a general sanction, intended to send a massage to the (Arab) residents that they would have to pay a price for any terrorist act". According to IDF sources, there was no security justification for preventing Palestinians from using the road. "This is not the solution that will prevent terrorist attacks", they added. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 March)

158. On 16 March 1999, Israeli border police collected Israeli-issued identity cards in a mosque at Al Ram, north of Jerusalem. The border police also raided houses at Al Ram and Bir Nabala to collect the identity cards of their owners. The citizens concerned, whose numbers has reached more than 2,200, have been denied health and national insurance. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 March)

159. On 19 March, Prime Minister Netanyahu revoked Ziyad Abu Zayad's VIP card, and suspended the special travel privileges of Hanan Ashrawi and Faisal Husseini. The decision followed a meeting in Jerusalem's Orient House between the three Palestinian Authority officials and 10 foreign consuls-general. Abu Zayad's VIP pass had allowed him free entry into Israel; Husseini's and Ashrawi's privileges had permitted them to pass through checkpoints from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to *Ha'aretz*, Israeli security sources strongly criticized the decisions, defining them as "pointless provocation by Netanyahu, with no real justification". The sources especially criticized the timing of the decisions, just as the Palestinian Authority was stepping up its efforts to combat terrorist activities by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 19 March)

160. On 22 March, Palestinian officials prevented cargo-laden trucks from crossing the Karni checkpoint between Israel and the Gaza Strip, in protest against the new levies that had gone into effect the day before. The levies, which range from NIS 150 to NIS 500, depending on the size of the vehicle, were intended to be shared equally between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 March)

161. On 26 March, it was reported that the Israeli authorities had refused to permit trucks carrying agricultural products from the Gaza Strip to enter the country at the Erez crossing. Officials of the Agricultural Ministry took the step in response to the refusal of Palestinians to permit Israeli trucks to enter the Gaza Strip at Karni crossing. A week before, the Israeli Airports Authority, which manages the Karni crossing, imposed a tariff of between NIS 200 and NIS 580 on every truck using the crossing in either direction. The Palestinians complained that their net profit on a truck was less than the amount of the fees they were forced to pay. As a result, the Palestinian Authority had decided to close the Karni crossing on its side. (*Ha'aretz*, 26 March)

162. On 29 March, Prime Minister Netanyahu announced that he would close the offices of three Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem — the Palestinian Prisoner Club, the Palestinian News Agency (WAFA), and the office of the Palestinian Authority Deputy Minister for Christian Affairs. Netanyahu made his announcement after a meeting with Foreign Minister Sharon, Defence Minister Arens, and Internal Security Minister Kahalani. In addition, travel restrictions were to be imposed on a number of Palestinian officials: Palestinian Cabinet member Ziyad Abu Zayad, who lives in Azariya outside of Jerusalem, and Jamil Othman, the Palestinian Authority-appointed Governor of Jerusalem, would be barred from entering Jerusalem. Both Chief Palestinian negotiator Erekat and members of the Israeli opposition described the Government's decision to close the three Palestinian institutions as an election campaign ploy. Over the past two years, the Government has closed down some 40 Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem. (*Jerusalem Post*, 30 March)

163. On 3 April, in a show of backing for Palestinian claims to East Jerusalem, dozens of supporters of the Gush Shalom Movement marched to Orient House. They presented Faisal Husseini, the Palestinian Authority Minister responsible for Jerusalem, with a manifesto signed by 520 Israelis supporting a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its "joint capital". The event came only days after the government had announced its intention to close down three offices in East

Jerusalem on the grounds that they were affiliated with the Palestinian Authority. It also said it would bar Palestinian Authority Minister Ziyad Abu Ziyad, who represents Jerusalem in the Palestinian Legislative Council, from entering the city. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 April)

164. On 5 April, the main trade route between Israel and the Gaza Strip, the Karni crossing, was closed by Israel following a fee dispute between Israel and the Palestinians. Salim Abu Safiyah, who runs the Palestinian side of the Karni crossing stated that Israel closed the gates after the Palestinians refused to pay a new fee of US$ 21 for each empty truck. Israel also imposed a 75 per cent fee increase for trucks carrying cargo. The Palestinian official stated that the Palestinian economy loses US$ 5 million each day the Karni crossing is closed. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 6 April)

165. On 5 April, for the second time in two weeks, the Israeli authorities closed the Muntar (Karni) crossing between Gaza and Israel which is used only by commercial vehicles. All other crossings into Gaza for commercial use were also closed following a dispute over the payment of fees to the Israel Airport and Seaports Authority. Palestinian officials complained that the Israeli authorities wanted to charge fees for empty trucks and for citrus containers, as well as for the shipments of flour and wheat that go through the crossing. They say that this is in violation of previous agreements. They expressed surprise at the closing of the commercial crossings, particularly after an agreement was reached only days earlier to decrease the disputed fees by 25 per cent. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 April)

166. On 10 April, an Israeli Navy patrol boat fired on Palestinian fishermen off the coast of Khan Yunis, wounding two. Palestinian officials stated that the shots were fired without justification, saying that the fishermen were in waters under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. However, IDF said that the fishermen were in waters closed to Palestinian shipping. According to the Cairo Agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian fishermen are allowed to fish up to 20 km from the shore. However, there is a relatively narrow "sterile" area between Khan Yunis and Rafah, which Palestinian vessels are prohibited from crossing. Israel Navy patrol boats are authorized to stop and check suspicious vessels along the shores of Gaza. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 11 April)

167. On 17 April, Palestinian Authority Cabinet Minister Ziyad Abu Ziyad stated that he was detained by the Israeli police and escorted out of Jerusalem after being told that he was no longer allowed to enter the city. Abu Ziyad, who lives just outside the city limits, said that the Government was trying to make an example of him. After hosting European diplomats at Orient House last month, his VIP status, which had allowed him to legally enter Jerusalem as a West Bank resident, was withdrawn. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 18 April)

168. On 17 April, the Israeli police prevented Palestinian Authority Minister Ziyad from entering Jerusalem. Ziyad said, "I am a Palestinian citizen who has been living in Jerusalem since I was born. Nobody can prevent me from living in my hometown." (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 April)

169. On 22 April, the Israeli High Court of Justice ordered the State Attorney's Office to review the files of all residents of East Jerusalem who lost their permanent residency status between 1989 and 1991, to determine whether the Interior Ministry had applied the same criteria for revoking residency rights as applied currently. The order was issued at the opening hearing of two petitions demanding that the Interior Ministry return the permanent residency permits of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem whose permits had expired. Four members of the International Commission of Jurists, including retired Indian Chief Justice Rajindar Sachar, attended the hearing. Sachar stated that the Government's policy violated Israeli law and that the issue of Government revocation, for any reason, of residency rights of people born in East Jerusalem was open to question. Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi voiced satisfaction that the proceedings were being monitored by four members of the International Commission of Jurists. "This has some kind of moral effect, so that they can't do things in the dark, like cancelling people out of existence on the computer." She stated that the Interior Ministry steps were "... illegal, racist and have distorted the legal system in Israel". (*Jerusalem Post*, 23 April)

170. On 22 April, the Israeli Supreme Court is to deliberate the legal practices used by Israeli officials to revoke hundreds of Israeli-issued id[illegible] cards from Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. Five Israeli human rights groups jointly filed the petition that seeks to annul the groundless legal measures that have been used to cancel the residency status of 8,000 Palestinians since 1995, making them not eligible for their social entitlements as Israeli citizens, including crucial health services. The presence of an international law delegation inside the court is seen by outside observers as a message to the Israeli judges that this is a very serious matter that will affect the international legal community as well as the people of Palestinian East Jerusalem. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 April)

171. On 22 April, the Israeli High Court has given the Government of Israel three months to explain its policy

regarding the residency rights of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 30 April)

172. On 26 May, Palestinian Authority Minister Ziyad was detained and questioned by police in Jerusalem and escorted outside the city limits. He had previously received the same treatment. An injunction prohibiting entry to Jerusalem was issued against Ziyad and several other Palestinian Authority officials in late March, after they had met with foreign diplomats at Orient House. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 May)

173. On 28 May, it was reported that the chances for the opening of a safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza Strip were growing somewhat stronger with the new Israeli Government under the Prime Minister-elect Barak. The safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza Strip is one of the main unresolved issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It has cut the Palestinian territories into two separate geographic entities. Only holders of VIP cards can travel between the two areas. Palestinians want unrestricted safe passage between these territories. Israel wants Palestinian passengers to acquire the proper permits and use buses at certain specified times. Private cars could not use the route without having permits. Palestinians and Israelis have also disagreed over the northern route of the proposed safe passage. The Palestinians want it to end in the village of Beit Or, on the Green Line, while Israel wants it to end at Beituna in an area under the control of the Palestinian Authority. As a result of the travel restrictions imposed in 1996 by the Labour Government, the number of Gazan students studying in West Bank universities has been reduced from 1,200 in 1996 to 450 students this year. Only 46 out of the 70 students from Gaza who study at An Najah university have recently been given permits to travel between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 28 May)

174. On 16 June, it was reported that the Interior Ministry had deprived 117 Palestinians of Jerusalem residency during the first 5 months of the current year. Some 788 Palestinians lost their Jerusalem residency the previous year; 606 in 1997 and 689 in 1996, the first year when Israel canceled residency rights on a large scale. Any Palestinian who moves outside the capital can be stripped of his residency, even if the move was due solely to an inability to find housing in Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 June)

175. On 18 June, it was reported that Ahmad Batsh, a Palestinian legislator from Jerusalem, stated that the joining of the coalition government by the ultra-orthodox Shas party would mark a setback for the peace process. "Shas may have been a partner [to Rabin and Peres], but we in Jerusalem, especially, have seen Shas' policies." Widespread confiscation of identity cards from East Jerusalem Palestinians on the ground they resided elsewhere and home demolitions are the main legacies of Shas Party Interior Minister Eli Suissa, Batsh stated. Interior Ministry spokesperson Tova Ellinson said that the Ministry's policy on identity cards preceded Suissa's term in office. "There was no change in the policy and no change in the law. Wherever Suissa could be lenient, he was." She said that the number of demolition orders issued by the Ministry had declined. (*Jerusalem Post*, 18 June)

176. On 31 July, it was reported that a spokesperson for Prime Minister Barak stated that Barak had returned the VIP entry permit to the Palestinian Minister Ziyad. Ziyad's VIP permit, which allowed him free access to Jerusalem, was confiscated in March by the previous Government. Barak's spokesperson stated that "The reason for the return is another effort to build trust between the two sides." Ziyad stated that returning his VIP entry permit came too late, and in any case Barak's decision cannot be considered as a gesture since he has the full right to enter Jerusalem. He said that Israel should re-examine its policy regarding entry permits for Palestinians. According to Ziyad, Palestinians entered Jerusalem and Israel freely until March 1993 without any need for entry permits. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 1 August)

177. On 9 August, it was reported that a severe shortage of Israeli passport controllers had led to fistfights as crowds of Palestinians converged on the Allenby Bridge station to cross into Jordan the previous weekend. The problem began when Israel Police transferred a large number of passport controllers from the bridge to Ben Gurion Airport to help with the rush of Israelis travelling abroad. Palestinian Authority Minister for Civil Affairs Jamil Tariffi appealed to Major General Ya'cov Or, the Government Coordinator of Activities in the Territories, to find a solution, defence officials stated. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 August)

178. On 19 August, after five years, IDF reopened part of Hebron's Shuhada Street, the city's main thoroughfare. Settlers protested that the move would gravely endanger them. Barak's spokesperson stated that the reopening of the street "showed that the Government of Israel intended to fulfil all the international agreements to which it is a signatory". The street was shut after the February 1994 massacre of 29 Moslem worshippers by a settler from Kiryat Arba, Baruch Goldstein, who opened fire on them as they recited Friday prayers. Security officials at the time were concerned that Shuhada Street would become a venue for violence against settlers, who reside along part of the street. They thus forbade Palestinian traffic except for ambulance and municipality vehicles, while Israeli vehicles were free to use the street. The reopening did not include the parts of Shuhada Street that pass in front of settler housing. The

Hebron Protocol, signed during the tenure of the Government of Binyamin Netanyahu, provides for the reopening of the road to Palestinian traffic. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 20 August)

Closures

179. On 28 February, it was reported that a total closure had been imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as a response to the warning that Hamas may try to carry out attacks during the Purim holiday. The closure barred Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip from entering Israel, but did not include the Karni industrial zone which means that the 15,000 Palestinians employed there would be able to go to work. According to the IDF, soldiers at roadblocks were instructed to allow emergency and humanitarian cases to go through. Shlomo Dror, spokesperson for the Coordinator of Activities in the West Bank said "We know that closures are effective in the short term and because it is a holiday when businesses will be shut, it won't be so bad. We hope it will be only for a short time." According to the *Jerusalem Post*, there were no closures during Purim in 1998. There were only five days of closure following the killing of two senior Hamas activists, the Awadallah brothers. In 1997, there were 63 days of closure, all following the suicide bombings at "Apropo" cafe at Tel Aviv and on Rehov Ben Yehuda street and Mahaneh Yehuda in Jerusalem. In 1994, the territories were sealed for 94 days after a wave of bombings, including an attack at the Dizengoff Center at Tel Aviv on Purim. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 28 February)

180. On 28 February, the Israeli Border Police prevented a disabled nine-year-old boy from entering Jerusalem to receive medical treatment. He is the son of Tawfiq Tirawi, the head of Palestinian intelligence in the West Bank. Tirawi said that his son was in a car accident three years ago and comes to Jerusalem for weekly physical therapy. The policemen claimed that they had acted in accordance with the law because the Tirawis did not have the proper entry papers and the boy's mother had failed to produce a special permit needed during the recently imposed closure of the West Bank and Gaza. The police contended further that the case was not a health emergency. Palestinian Preventive Security Chief Jibril Rajoub stated that the closure had been imposed as a form of collective punishment on the Palestinian people, not because Israel received warning of attacks. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 1 March)

181. On 1 March, it was reported that Prime Minister Netanyahu had differed with Defence Minister Arens about reasons for the closure imposed on the West Bank and Gaza. Netanyahu said that the four-day closure was necessary because the Palestinian Authority had not fulfilled its commitment to fight terrorism, particularly by Hamas. By contrast, Arens stated that there was effective security cooperation with the Palestinian Authority and "it's clear that the Palestinian Authority is not interested in terrorist attacks". Arens said, however, that a major reason for closure was warning received of possible terrorist attacks. Palestinian Authority Planning Minister Nabil Sha'ath stated that the closure was motivated by Netanyahu's desire to court Israeli voters. He also pointed out that Israel had never arrested a Palestinian with a valid work permit on suspicion of attempting terrorist activity — meaning that closure "punishes the innocent" by keeping permit holders home away from work. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 1 March)

182. On 4 March, it was reported that Defence Minister Arens had ordered the lifting of the closure that was imposed on the West Bank and Gaza. The IDF spokesperson said that Arens' decision was based on consultations with military and security authorities. The closure had been in effect for four days. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 March)

183. On 10 March, women from both Hadash, the Arab-Jewish Party, and the Palestinian Workers' Society protested against discrimination of Palestinian women. They congregated at the Al Ram checkpoint in northern Jerusalem, stating that during closures the year before, two Palestinian women in labour and seven babies had died because they were prevented from entering Israel. (*Jerusalem Post*, 11 March)

184. On 2 April, it was reported that IDF had closed the entrance to the villages of Beit Likhye and Deir Abu Masha'l in the Ramallah area, after two Israelis were injured by stones thrown at their vehicles two days before. The IDF Spokesperson stated that the entrance to the villages' entrance would remain closed until further notice. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 April)

185. On 5 April, IDF lifted a five-day closure it had imposed on Deir Abu Masha'l village near Ramallah after arresting six Palestinians suspected of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles. A total of 18 Palestinians had been rounded up for questioning in the village and handed over to the police. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 April)

186. On 14 April, the Muntar (Karni) crossing was reopened following a 10-day closure. The Director of Border Crossings for the Palestinian Authority said Palestinian import-export merchants had lost an estimated 250 million shekels in trading owing to the closure of the Muntar crossing. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

187. On 13 June, it was reported that a German arrest warrant for a Palestinian responsible for the 1976 murder of 11 Israeli Olympic athletes had created an embarrassing dilemma for Israel. Abu Daoud (Mohamad Daoud U'da) was expected to enter Israel on the same or following day through the Allenby Bridge crossing, on his way to Ramallah. He had been allowed to enter the West Bank in 1996 in order to attend a meeting of the Palestinian National Council. Israeli security sources noted that the fact that U'da was permitted to enter three years earlier indicates that he is no longer considered a security threat. It was reported that U'da had told Qatar television that the Munich operation was intended "... to take hostages in order to bring about release of 500 Palestinian prisoners". Later the same day, it was reported that outgoing Prime Minister Netanyahu had barred U'da from entering Palestinian Authority areas. Netanyahu also revoked his VIP pass which gave him access to Palestinian Authority controlled areas. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 13 and 14 June)

188. On 9 June, the Israeli Air Force held what was called a "battle day" mock flying combat mission over the country, closing down its entire air space for several hours in the morning. Palestinian Authority officials complained of the restrictions, which they said forced it to shut down Gaza International Airport for 90 minutes and cancel the day's one scheduled flight, an Egypt Air flight from Cairo. (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 June)

189. On 18 June, it was reported that Prime Minister-elect Barak had announced in an interview with *Ha'aretz* that he intended to build in the near future a bridge between Beit Hanoun, on the border of the Gaza Strip, and Dura, in the Hebron Area. However, he refused to affirm that it will strengthen a Palestinian state, or even officially link its two main regions, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Barak proposed that the bridge be a "kind of highway on pillars for 47 km, with four lanes, a railway line, a water pipe and a communications cable — that's about what is needed". Under the Oslo accords, Israel was committed to enable "safe passage" between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. So far, Israel failed to do so. Palestinian leaders urged Barak to hold off on the plan to build the bridge. "I think that Barak should concentrate on [implementing] the South and the North for the interim period", said Palestinian negotiator Erekat. Erekat was referring to a provision in the Wye River memorandum for the implementation of an idea that is at least as old as the Oslo process: opening transit routes for Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The issue of "safe passage" was placed on hold with the suspension of the Wye memorandum six months earlier. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 18 to 20 June)

190. On 4 August, Mohammed Horani who represents Hebron in the Palestinian Legislative Council, stated that the closure and the curfew imposed after the shootings there two days earlier illustrated that Israel's attitude towards the Palestinian population has not changed, despite the change of government. As a result of the shooting, two Israeli settlers were lightly wounded. "It's an ugly way of doing things and it simply makes more people angry and pushes more people to be with the side that believes in violence", Horani stated. (*Jerusalem Post*, 4 and 5 August)

191. On 11 August, it was reported that IDF had sealed off a number of Palestinian villages surrounding the Mevo Dotan settlement in the West Bank, as the search for the gunman who had ambushed a Jewish settler moved to the Palestinian-controlled areas. IDF sealed off Arab and a number of other villages in the vicinity. Nobody was permitted to enter or to leave except "humanitarian cases". IDF is barred from carrying out searches in Area A, which is under Palestinian control. (*Jerusalem Post*, 12 August)

C. Manner of implementation of restrictions

192. On 29 March, the Israeli Ministerial Committee for Jerusalem Affairs decided to close three Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, claiming that they operated illegally in the city. The Committee decided not to close Orient House outright but to impair its activities. The Committee also decided to issue an injunction forbidding Palestinian Authority Minister Ziyad from entering Jerusalem. A simple injunction was issued also against the Palestinian Authority Jerusalem Affairs Governor, Jamil Othman. The closure was also imposed on the office of the Palestinian News Agency WAFA in East Jerusalem; the Prisoners Club, which offers financial help to the families of Palestinian political prisoners and ex-prisoners, and the Palestinian Authority Christian Affairs Department. The new measures are seen as a major blow against Palestinian Authority presence in East Jerusalem. More than 200,000 Palestinians live in East Jerusalem and possess Israeli-issued identity cards. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 2 April)

193. On 4 April, further to an announcement by Prime Minister Netanyahu, Israeli police delivered closure orders to Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem for allegedly operating illegally in Jerusalem. Palestinian officials denounced the move as a publicity stunt. The offices to be closed included the Palestinian News Service WAFA, the Arab Moslem Christian Committee and the Palestinian Prisoners' Club. Closure orders allowed for 12 hours to file

an appeal and were to take effect 24 hours later. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 5 April)

194. On 8 April, the High Court of Justice was scheduled to discuss a petition against the closure of two East Jerusalem offices for allegedly operating as Palestinian Authority agencies. The closure order originally included a third office — the Palestinian News Service WAFA — but this item was dropped after WAFA proved that it was recognized by the Government Press Office as an accredited news agency. Palestinian Authority Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, Faisal Husseini, was investigated by the Israeli Police Minorities Division the week earlier for allegedly organizing a Fatah gathering in East Jerusalem's Hakawati Theater. Husseini refused to respond to questions and was released. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 8 April)

195. On 8 April, it was reported that the Palestinian Prisoners' Club would move from its offices in East Jerusalem and relocate in territory under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority within a week following an agreement reached with Israeli authorities a few days earlier. As part of the same agreement, 'Ibrahim Kandalaft, Palestinian Authority President Arafat's representative to the Christian community in Jerusalem, promised not to meet with representatives of the Palestinian Authority on Israeli territory without special permission from Israeli authorities. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 April, *Jerusalem Post*, 11 April)

196. On 9 April, it was reported that the Israeli police had stopped the proceedings to close the Prisoners' Club and the office of Christian Affairs in East Jerusalem following a legal suit lodged with the High Court. A third institution, the WAFA News Agency, was exempted from closure. Advocate Jawad Boulos said that the closure of the Palestinian institutions was not justified because they were not affiliated with the Palestinian Authority. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 April)

197. On 13 April, Israeli police issued a closure order to the Moslem Christian Committee for allegedly violating an agreement, reached a week earlier, to refrain from contact with the Palestinian Authority. The same week police issued closure orders to three Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem for allegedly operating illegally. Advocate Jawad Boulos testified during a hearing in the High Court that the Palestinian institutions were not working for the Palestinian Authority and would not do so in the future. Police said that Ibrahim Kandalaft, Palestinian Authority representative to the Christian community in Jerusalem, had since returned to the office and been working for the Palestinian Authority. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 14 April)

198. On 15 April, the Arab Islamic-Christian Council (AICC) in Jerusalem denounced the Israeli authorities for closing its offices in the city. "We are a non-profit charitable society that has no linkage with any circle", said the Council in a statement. AICC is one of the three Palestinian institutions which had recently been closed by the Israeli Government before the Israeli police rescinded the closure. Police claim that the AICC has violated an agreement not to use the Council. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

199. On 21 April, the PLO senior leader in Jerusalem, Faisal Husseini, met with foreign diplomats to discuss with them the Israeli measures in the city. This is the second meeting in which Palestinians and European diplomats challenged the Government of Netanyahu by meeting in Jerusalem. Mr. Netanyahu has threatened to take punitive measures against Palestinian officials who met with foreign diplomats at Orient House, in East Jerusalem. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 April)

200. On 22 April, Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani threatened to close at least four Palestinian offices operating from Orient House in Jerusalem. This followed a decision by the security cabinet to shut down parts of Orient House in East Jerusalem where leading PLO official Faisal Husseini and three members of the Palestinian Legislative Council met with 30 foreign Consuls-General the day before. Opposition members of the Knesset and Palestinians accused the Government of making the threat as a ploy to boost election support for Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Likud party. Among the offices slated for closure were those of Husseini, who holds the Jerusalem portfolio in the Palestinian Authority, a land surveyor's office, and at least two other offices that Israeli officials alleged operate as Palestinian national agencies. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 23 April)

201. On 25 April, it was reported that Israeli police changed the lock on the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, located in the vicinity of Orient House, itself under threat of partial closure. Police stated that they closed the office because it had reopened in violation of an order issued earlier in the month. Faisal Husseini, the PLO official in charge of Jerusalem affairs, warned at a news conference that there would be violence if offices in Orient House were shut down. Husseini countered the Government's argument that the offices violate the Oslo accords. He stated that they represented the PLO and not the Palestinian Authority. Husseini stated further that if his offices were closed, it would mark an end to the "so-called peace process". According to the *Jerusalem Post*, the actual closing of the offices at Orient House could take more than 10 days, pending discussions between the Israeli police and legal

authorities on how to carry out the Government's decision. (*Jerusalem Post*, 26 April)

202. On 26 April, Public Security Minister Kahalani issued closure warnings to three offices in Orient House in East Jerusalem. Police issued letters to officials at Orient House which stated that Kahalani was "considering using his authority ... to issue closure orders against these offices" unless the officials "closed these offices and put an end to their activity". The letters gave the three offices 24 hours to appeal. Palestinian officials rejected the Israeli allegations of illegal activity as electioneering before the 17 May poll and stated that they would fight the decision. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 27 April)

203. On 27 April, it was reported that Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani had upset Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by granting Orient House an extension of several days to produce documentation showing that the three offices slated to be closed were not operating illegally. Kahalani was to meet also with Palestinian Authority negotiator Saeb Erekat in this connection, but no date was set. Offices slated for closure were the Office of National Institutions, geographer Khalil Tufakji's office (which investigates settlement construction), and Faisal Husseini's office of National Research. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 April)

204. On 28 April, it was revealed that Deputy Minister Michael Eitan had held months of secret talks with Orient House leader Husseini and that Prime Minister Netanyahu had authorized the negotiations, which produced agreement on a range of issues. Eitan confirmed that he had held the talks, but refused to reveal any details except to say that he had been functioning in an official capacity. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 April)

205. On 28 April, Palestinian Authority Minister Husseini confirmed that he had conducted secret discussions for more than a year concerning the future of Jerusalem with Likud Deputy Minister Eitan. Prime Minister Netanyahu denied authorizing Eitan to hold the talks with Husseini. Netanyahu told reporters that "Jerusalem is not a subject of discussion". Husseini refused to indicate whether some of his meetings with Eitan took place at Orient House, the East Jerusalem compound that Netanyahu had targeted for closing due to allegations that Palestinian Authority affairs had been conducted there. (*Ha'aretz*, 29 April)

206. On 30 April, it was reported that a decision was made to delay by two days a preclosure hearing with the Orient House lawyer. The delay was authorized at the conclusion of a meeting between Prime Minister Netanyahu, Public Security Minister Kahalani and the State Attorney's Office. (*Ha'aretz*, 30 April)

207. On 5 May, it was reported that a lawyer for Orient House, Jawad Boulos, had presented documents to the Israeli police saying that Orient House is not part of the Palestinian Authority. Police say the documents are unconvincing. The implementation of the closure order concerning Orient House was nonetheless deferred until after a meeting between Palestinian chief negotiator Erekat and Israeli Public Security Minister Kahalani. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 May)

208. On 11 May, the Israeli High Court ruled to keep the three offices in Orient House open in East Jerusalem. The Government of Israel had been trying to close the offices before the May 17 Israeli elections. A temporary ruling prevented the Israeli Government from closing the offices for at least one week. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 14 May)

209. On 28 May, it was reported that Public Security Minister Kahalani said that he is keen on carrying out the closure of three offices in Orient House. The case of Orient House is under deliberation by the Israeli High Court. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 28 May)

210. On 21 July, following a meeting with the new Israeli Public Security Minister, Shlomo Ben Ami, the Holder of the Jerusalem File, Faisal Husseini, said that the Orient House file was now closed. The Netanyahu Government had issued last May an order to close down three offices inside Orient House on grounds that they were serving as offices for Palestinian Authority activities. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 July)

1. Delays and difficulties in granting authorizations

211. On 10 May, police delivered closure orders against three offices in Orient House in East Jerusalem, following a failure by the Israeli Government and Palestinian officials to reach a compromise. The closure orders were delivered to Jawad Boulos, an attorney for the Palestinians. The Palestinians were given 24 hours to appeal. Boulos stated that Orient House would not file an appeal to the Israeli High Court of Justice because the Palestinians did not recognize Israeli jurisdiction over East Jerusalem. However, it was reported that a group of eight Israelis announced that they would petition the High Court in order to postpone implementation of the closure orders. The offices slated for closure included the Office for National Institutions, Khalil Tufakji's office that investigates settlement construction, and Faisal Husseini's Office of National Research. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 11 May)

212. On 27 May, it was reported that the attorney for the three Orient House offices subject to closure orders in East Jerusalem wrote in his reply to the High Court of Justice that

he hoped that a compromise can be reached with the new Israeli Government. A High Court temporary injunction had been issued two weeks earlier, postponing any action against Orient House until after the elections. In his reply to the Court, the attorney argued that the decision to close the offices was politically motivated. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 May)

213. On 28 May, it was reported that the Islamic Wakf director, Adnan Husseini, said that the Wakf authority in East Jerusalem should not seek permits from the municipality to carry out renovations inside the compound of the Al Aqsa Mosque. Husseini was responding to the Israeli cabinet which discussed the issue in its session two days earlier. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 28 May)

2. Checkpoints

214. On 3 February, it was reported that Dr. Ahmed Tibi, an adviser to Palestinian Authority President Arafat, was to be tried at the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court for insulting and refusing to cooperate with border policemen who tried to search his car at the Al Ram Junction in January 1998. When he was charged in December, Tibi told Israel Radio that the decision to charge him was politically motivated, adding that it was the policemen and not him who had acted inappropriately. (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 February)

215. On 30 April, a military judge extended the detention of a Palestinian citizen of the West Bank who suffers from a congenital heart disease and had suffered a brain stroke a month before his arrest. Amin Arbar, 27 years old, was arrested by the General Security Service (GSS) on 16 March while crossing the Allenby checkpoint. Immediately after his arrest, he was hospitalized, and during hospitalization was subject to daily interrogation. After leaving the hospital, Arbar was placed in jail and on 27 April his detention was extended for an additional 15 days. (*Ha'aretz*, 30 April)

216. On 2 April, IDF troops arrested 12 Palestinians from Deir Abu Masha'al near Ramallah suspected of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles. They were questioned by the police. Due to the increase in stone-throwing incidents in the area, IDF had set up roadblocks at the entrance to the village. (*Jerusalem Post*, 4 April)

3. Interrogation procedures

217. On 11 February, it was reported that the GSS had begun to use opaque eyeglasses to restrict the vision of prisoners when they are transported between holding rooms and interrogation rooms, instead of covering their heads with cloth sacks as had been done in the past. This was, at least, the case with Jihad Shehada. A few days earlier, the GSS had interrogated physics teacher Shehada, 32, after he had spent a year-and-a-half in jail under administrative detention. According to Shehada's lawyer, during the waiting period immediately before his interrogation, Shehada's hands and legs were cuffed and his wrists were attached to the chair on which he was sitting. Shehada stated that he was kept in the cuffed position for three days, except for two occasions when he was called into the actual interrogation chamber. During the waiting period, he was forced to listen to loud drum music accompanied from time to time by an English sentence saying: "No one will save you. You are alone." Shehada estimated that he did not sleep more than four hours during the three days. (*Ha'aretz*, 11 February)

218. On 27 April, it was reported that the commander of IDF troops in the Gaza Strip had discharged a soldier for having tortured Palestinian detainees in the Erez Detention Center. The torture scandal came to light following disclosure to ACRI, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, by a fellow soldier who stated that he had decided to inform ACRI after his unsuccessful filing of a complaint with the commander of the Detention Center. According to the disclosure, the offending soldier had, for example, severely beaten a Palestinian detainee merely for having smiled at him. He strangled the detainee and knocked his head against the wall. On another occasion, the offending soldier broke the arm and injured the head of a Palestinian detainee. (*Ha'aretz*, 27 April)

219. On 6 May, the Public Committee Against Torture (PCATI) petitioned the High Court of Justice to instruct GSS to allow its attorney to meet with Amin Ajbar, a Nablus resident arrested on suspicion of security offences. The PCATI petition claimed that Ajbar, 27, was arrested one and a half months earlier and had since been prevented from meeting with his legal counsel. PCATI strongly suspected that Ajbar, who has a heart defect and suffered a stroke two months before his arrest, was being tortured. PCATI was further concerned that Ajbar was not receiving treatment against blood clotting, without which his life could be in danger. Also on 6 May, PCATI submitted a petition to the High Court of Justice to stop GSS from "exercising physical and mental pressure" during the interrogation of Yossouf Bayed. Bayed, a 31-year-old resident of Jeffna village near Ramallah, had been held in administrative detention since 15 April on suspicion of membership in the Islamic Jihad. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 May)

220. On 16 May, it was reported that Aharon Barak, Chief Justice of the Israeli Supreme Court, had won an International Jurists' Association's prize. The "Justice in the World" prize is offered annually to figures who contribute "to preserving the independence of justice and the rights and liberties of individuals". Amnesty International criticized

the Association's choice of Justice Barak, 66, since he supported through his rulings the use of torture and unlimited imprisonment of individuals being used as bargaining chips. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 May)

221. On 26 May, it was reported that a panel of nine High Court justices, headed by Chief Justice Barak, was due to resume hearing seven petitions calling for an end to the use of torture by the General Security Service (GSS) to extract information from detainees. The Court had heard many individual petitions on this issue in the past. For the first time, however, it agreed to consider the general legality of some of the methods used by the GSS. Two of the petitions, submitted by the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI), called for a ban on the use of "shabah" — a technique involving the suspension of detainees in a contorted and painful position. In one version of the "shabah", detainees are seated on kindergarten-size chairs with bound hands and feet. A hood is placed on their head, and they are forced to listen to loud music which deprives them of sleep. Another petition submitted by PCATI argues that there is no basis in Israeli law for such GSS interrogation methods. The B'Tselem human rights group said that if the Court rejected the petitions, Israel would be the only democracy that gives legal protection to torture. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 26 May)

222. On 26 May, observers from several international human rights organizations were present when the High Court of Justice completed its hearing of petitions calling for an end to the use of "moderate physical pressure" by GSS interrogators. Six of the petitioners attorneys presented their arguments to the Court. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 27 May)

223. On 3 June, it was reported that the State Attorney's Office had argued in a deposition submitted to the High Court of Justice that under the principle of "necessity of defence", the use of "moderate physical pressure" against suspects who may have knowledge of a pending terrorist attack was not a criminal act and is made justifiable by the circumstances. The deposition was presented at the request of the Court, which completed hearing a petition against the use of painful interrogation techniques by the General Security Service a week earlier. (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 June)

224. On 9 June, it was reported that the High Court of Justice refused to hold a hearing on a petition alleging that GSS was torturing a prisoner, instead giving GSS four days to respond. PCATI had complained that GSS was violating its commitment to the Court to refrain from using physical pressure against Ali Abu Ras. He was arrested more than one month earlier, and PCATI petitioned the Court in his name three weeks before. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 June)

225. On 7 June, it was reported that two brothers from Beit Fajjar who have been held for security offences since 29 May 1999, were subjected to torture. The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment (LAW), which revealed the case, believes the torture methods included the use of physical and psychological pressure. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 11 June)

226. On 6 August, it was reported that Justice Minister Yossi Beilin was considering the possibility of banning the use of "moderate physical pressure" by GSS interrogators, according to an interview he gave to the *Jerusalem Post*. For the past few years, the Israeli Government was working on a bill to establish an official, legal status for GSS. One of the problems delaying its approval was the paragraph legalizing GSS interrogation methods which human rights groups have branded as torture. The two most controversial methods include violent shaking, known as "teltulim", and forcing detainees to sit in extremely uncomfortable positions for long periods of time, known as "shabah". Beilin also stated that he intends to do away with administrative detention in Israel, which he described as obsolete. He added that he would try to eliminate or at least soften the terms of administrative detention in the occupied territories. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 August)

4. Administrative detention and conditions of detention

227. On 26 February, a Military Court judge extended for an additional eight days the administrative detention of Jihad Shehadah, for further GSS interrogation, but not without expressing doubt as to the necessity of the detention. Shehada had been under an administrative detention order since August 1997. On 7 February 1999, a week before the administrative detention order was to expire, he was taken for further interrogation to Petah Tikva Prison. In his decision, the Military Court judge stated that "the link between the suspicion and the pieces of information is very flimsy and, in my judgement, it is very doubtful whether it justifies the detention. It is likely that I would order his release, if not for the following: the suspicion under section 6 of the GSS report is of such a nature as to substantially jeopardize public safety, and for that reason I will allow his continuous detention, but only for a very short period of time. If there is no progress in his interrogation, it will probably be impossible to put the suspect under detention, based upon the information as presented to me in the GSS report." (*Ha'aretz*, 26 February)

228. On 1 March, Israeli security forces threw tear gas at Palestinian detainees demonstrating in Megiddo prison

against the blanket extension of their detention orders. The detainees accused the Israeli authorities of violating an agreement to provide individuals more advance notice of the extension of their detention. According to Israeli sources, four prisoners were injured by the tear gas; Palestinian detainees reported that many more prisoners had been made ill and some had lost consciousness. The prisoners said that they had been promised they would receive between 10 days and two weeks notice prior to the extension of their detention. In fact, Israeli authorities informed them of the renewed orders only a few days in advance. In February, the detention orders of nine prisoners were extended. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 March)

229. On 7 March, Israel extended the detention of Osama Barham, a Palestinian held for the past five years without trial. His lawyer stated that the detention of Barham, 35, who was arrested in 1993 for membership in the Islamic Jihad, was extended by six months after he had rejected an offer to be deported. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 March)

230. On 2 April, it was reported that a human rights lawyer from the Hamoked Center for the Defence of the Individual had stated that she noted changes in the treatment of administrative detainees. At least a quarter of the 80 detainees at Megiddo prison underwent General Security Service interrogation and were then returned to administrative detention. Furthermore, there had been an increase in the number of convicts placed in administrative detention upon their release from jail. The most famous of these was Salah Shehada of Beit Hanoun at Gaza, who was convicted for his role in the establishment of the Hamas and was supposed to be released from jail six months earlier, but has since been held in administrative detention. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 April)

231. On 16 April, it was reported that 40 college students were placed in administrative detention by Israel, according to the head of the Prisoners' Friends Society, Ahmad Habiballa. Habiballa said that the students, who are enrolled at the An Najah and Bir Zeit universities, have been subjected to torture. They are also known to be activists in the Islamic Movement. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

232. On 30 April, a military judge extended the detention of a Palestinian citizen of the West Bank who suffers from a congenital heart disease and had suffered a brain stroke a month before his arrest. Amin Arbar, 27 years old, was arrested by GSS on 16 March while crossing the Allenby checkpoint. Immediately after his arrest, he was hospitalized, and during hospitalization was subject to daily interrogation. After leaving the hospital, Arbar was placed in jail and on 27 April his detention was extended for an additional 15 days. (*Ha'aretz*, 30 April)

233. On 16 June, it was reported that according to the 1998 Amnesty International annual report, Israel arrested 1,200 Palestinians for security offences and issued 270 administrative detention orders. Out of this number of administrative detainees, 83 remained in jail at the end of the year. The report also stated that more than 1,500 Palestinians in Israeli prisons were sentenced in trails that did not meet international standards of fairness. Among other problems, confessions obtained under torture were accepted as evidence. The Amnesty report also stated that Israeli security services systematically used torture during interrogations and that the Israeli High Court of Justice continued to reject petitions to prevent the General Security Service from using physical force against detainees. The report also charged that Israeli security forces killed at least 20 Palestinians the previous year in "suspicious circumstances" which were at best unjustified killings and at worst extrajudicial executions. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 16 June)

234. On 18 July, the longest-serving Palestinian administrative detainee in Israel was released after being held for six years without trial. Osama Barham was arrested in September 1993 on grounds that "he constituted a threat to Israel's security". Active in the Islamic Jihad movement, Barham was first arrested in 1985 and was given a seven-year jail sentence. (*Jerusalem Times*, 23 July)

235. On 19 July, it was reported that Osama Barham, a Palestinian held under administrative detention for five years and 10 months, was released from jail following an agreement with IDF and the Attorney General's Office. According to the deal, Barham, 35, promised "not to resort to acts of violence or threats of violence of any kind or towards any person, regardless of religion or nationality". Barham's lawyer, Tamar Peleg, stated that Barham had publicly disavowed violence long ago and that there was nothing new in the agreement he had signed. The agreement followed a petition to the High Court of Justice demanding that Barham be released on the grounds that during all the years of his incarceration, the State had failed to conduct an investigation that would have enabled it to put him on trail. He was jailed on 17 September 1993, on suspicion of being a member of the Islamic Jihad. His detention came one year after he had completed a seven-year jail sentence for activity in the Fatah. Over the past six years, IDF had issued 13 orders extending his detention, while the military court rejected three of his appeals. The High Court of Justice had also rejected a previous petition. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 19 July)

236. On 2 August, it was revealed that a military appeals court had reduced by half the administrative detention sentence of an alleged member of the Islamic Jihad movement because of the improved atmosphere between Israel and the Palestinians, as a result of the change of government. The detainee's lawyer, Tamar Peleg, called the decision "unprecedented". The detainee, Hani Hindi, from the West Bank village of Silat-Hartiya, had already been detained for two periods of four months and was ordered to remain in administrative detention for another six months beginning 4 July 1999. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 3 August)

5. Imprisonment and conditions of imprisonment

237. On 28 February, it was reported that the annual human rights report of the United States State Department had stated that both Israel's and the Palestinian Authority's security forces had committed "serious human rights abuses" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to the report, Israel's Security forces "abused, and in some cases tortured" Palestinian security suspects, and "committed a number of serious human rights abuses during the year". Israel also continued to detain Palestinian suspects without charge but this practice had "decreased significantly" in 1998, from 3,565 to 1,634. However, detention and prison conditions for Palestinian security suspects sometimes "do not meet minimum international standards". It was also reported that Israeli forces often subjected security suspects to "long and severe interrogations, using techniques "that do not result in detectable traces of mistreatment of the victims". Interrogating practices included forcing prisoners to stand or squat for a long time, exposing them to extreme temperatures, tying them in "contorted and painful positions", and beating them. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 February)

238. On 15 March, it was reported that the Israeli Government was considering the release of some 100 Palestinian prisoners on the occasion of Eid Al Adha at the end of the month. These prisoners were to be counted among the 750 prisoners that Israel had committed itself to release under the Wye accords. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 15 March)

239. On 22 March, PCATI renewed its efforts to seek a temporary restraining order from the Supreme Court of Justice against all alleged GSS torture of Palestinian prisoner Eisah Ali Batat. Batat is a 34-year-old resident of the Dahariyah refugee camp in the West Bank and is suspected of terrorist activities. Four weeks earlier, the Court rejected a PCATI petition which argued that torture violated Israeli and international law, and accepted the GSS contention that its treatment of Batat constituted "necessary defence". In its latest petition, the PCATI argued that GSS had continued to torture Batat during the month following his arrest and detention in Ashkelon prison and had provided the Court with inaccurate reports of his treatment. The appeal charged that for the first 28 days of his arrest, Batat's interrogators also barred him from meeting with a lawyer and arrested five other members of his family, two of whom have since been released. PCATI stated that the Court's rejection of the earlier petition was exploited by the GSS in order to continue torturing Batat until the time that the order barring his meeting with a lawyer had expired. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 March)

240. On 26 March, it was reported that Hamas prisoners held in Israel have sent a letter to the leaders of their movement requesting the arrangement of a ceasefire. Growing frustration among Hamas prisoners is apparently behind the letter and could reflect increasing tension within the movement. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 26 March)

241. On 29 March, it was reported that the Israeli Government was expected to announce its intention to release a number of Palestinian prisoners the following day. Israel Radio reported that there would be dozens of prisoners released, but none "with blood on their hands". Palestinian officials said that the releases, if indeed they took place, were not being coordinated with them and would not be an outcome of negotiations. Hisham Abd Al Razeq, Palestinian Authority Minister responsible for prisoner affairs, stated that a week earlier there were Israeli press reports about plans for releases, "but the holiday has come and is going and we know that not even a single person has been released". A wave of protests broke out in the West Bank in late 1998 after popular expectations were dashed that the Wye accords would set free a large number of political prisoners. (*Jerusalem Post*, 29 March)

242. On 30 March, it was reported that 14 Palestinian political prisoners were released from Israeli jails a day earlier. In response, Chief Palestinian Negotiator Erekat, stated "We don't need goodwill gestures. We need the release of prisoners in accordance with the Wye agreement." (*Jerusalem Post*, 30 March)

243. On 30 March, one person was injured during the demonstrations that marked the twenty-third anniversary of Land Day. Despite sporadic violent incidents, the celebration was considered the quietest Land Day anniversary in recent memory. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 2 April)

244. On 2 April, it was reported that while the High Court of Justice was deliberating the use of torture by GSS, human rights activists involved in anti-torture efforts said that they had observed a rise in the frequency of torture. Activists said that during the previous three months, suspects had reported

an increase in the intensity of the torture they were subjected to. Human rights groups said that prisoners were forbidden to meet with legal counsel for longer periods of time and that there had been a spate of administrative detainees undergoing interrogation and then being returned to detention. There had also been an increase in the number of convicts who had served their full sentences and are immediately placed in administrative detention, as well as an increase in the number of suspects coerced into collaboration in exchange for their freedom. While a security ordinance allows the GSS to deny a suspect from meeting a lawyer for up to 90 days, it had previously been rarely used. Lately, however, according to PCATI and Addameer, a Palestinian organization that advocates on behalf of political prisoners, the ordinance was being used more frequently to deny access to legal counsel for increasingly long periods of time. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 April)

245. On 2 April, it was reported that Sharif Dudeen, from Dura village, had been denied access to legal counsel since his arrest at the end of January. An urgent appeal on his behalf to the High Court of Justice was rejected. Khaled Fakusa, also from Dura, has been in detention since 5 February and was allowed to meet with his lawyer only at the end of March. Isa Batat, arrested at the end of February, was denied a lawyer's visit for 28 days. During the same period, five members of Batat's family were arrested; two had been released as of 2 April without being charged. According to testimonies gathered by human rights advocacy group Addameer and The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, the intensity of torture used by GSS has increased; human rights lawyers stated that the increase has followed the High Court's session in January regarding GSS torture. According to a statement from prisoner Isa Batat, for example, he was shackled to a small chair for several days while under interrogation. He was forced to bend over backwards while his legs were tied under the chair; if he fell, interrogators would stand on his feet to make him get up. He was also put on a table with an object under his back. While one interrogator held his legs, another pushed on his shoulders, as if to break his back. The handcuffs he was made to wear fitted tightly, preventing circulation in his hands. This, according to Batat, despite promises from a representative of the State Attorney's Office, who said that the handcuffs would be replaced. Prisoner Mouna Ka'adan from Ya'bed, who was released at the end of March after 28 days in detention — during which she went on a hunger strike — reported that she was held for five days in a position known as the "Shabah". This entails sitting on a chair with hands and legs shackled, head covered by a sack or eyes covered with dark glasses, and non-stop music played to prevent sleep. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 April)

246. On 2 April, it was reported that 12 Palestinian prisoners in Nafha prison were punished by the prison administration after clashes with the prison guards. The prisoners were not allowed to leave their cells and their electric appliances were taken away. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 2 April)

247. On 5 April, three Palestinian security prisoners were released from an Israeli jail. The three were supposed to have been freed along with 14 others as a goodwill gesture at the time of Id Al Adha, but Prime Minister Netanyahu had called for a delay to reconsider the cases. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 6 April)

248. On 21 May, a Palestinian prisoner, Nashat Sheraim, 24, was killed in Ramle prison. An inquiry committee has been formed to investigate the circumstances of the murder. Sheraim was serving an eight-year prison term on charges of attempting to kill his Israeli employer. He was a known activist in the Fatah movement. Fatah accused the Israeli prison authorities of being responsible for Sheraim's death. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 28 May)

249. On 4 June, it was reported that Palestinian prisoners at Ashkelon prison intended to launch an open-ended hunger strike in order to secure their release in accordance with the peace accords signed with Israel. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 4 June)

250. On 2 July, it was reported that Palestinian prisoners on strike at Jalamah prison are suffering from maltreatment, including beating and humiliation. In a letter from the prison, the 120 prisoners described their conditions as brutal and inhuman. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 2 July)

251. On 19 July, it was reported that the Knesset had approved in its first reading of government legislation that would extend until June 2002 the emergency regulations governing relations with Palestinians and the occupied territories. A new provision in the legislation, which has been extended every few years since 1967, would allow Palestinian prisoners held in Israel to petition a special committee for their sentences to be reduced by one third, an opportunity afforded to Israeli prisoners. Justice Minister Beilin stated that the new regulations would be formulated if Israel reached a final-status accord with the Palestinian Authority. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 20 July)

252. On 22 July, Justice Minister Beilin stated to Israel Radio on the issue of releasing Palestinian prisoners that "there is no logic to the criterion of 'blood on one's hands' ... (t)his principle is immoral by definition". "The one who

sends is at least as guilty as the one who was sent to kill, if not more so. The punishment of those who give the orders should not be lighter than the punishment of the one who carries them out. We have reconciled with and pardoned the Palestinian leadership and all four Prime Ministers since 1993 have shaken the hands of [Palestinian Authority Chairman] Arafat and the Palestinian leadership." Beilin suggested two new criteria for not releasing Palestinian prisoners: first, committing terrorist attacks after the signing of the Oslo accords (September 1993) and second, failing to accept the peace process and the Oslo accords. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 23 July)

253. On 28 July, it was reported that the most pressing issue on the Israeli-Palestinian agenda, following the question of redeployment was the matter of prisoner release. Israelis and Palestinians had agreed on the number of prisoners to be released under the Wye accord — 700 — but not on the type. Former Prime Minister Netanyahu had refused to release what he called prisoners "with blood on their hands", that is any Palestinian involved in a fatal terrorist attack. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 July)

254. On 18 August, it was reported that talks with the Palestinians had broken down over the issue of prisoner releases. However, the Israeli Government released one long-term prisoner with "blood on his hands", citing his poor health. The meeting broke up after the Government's negotiator, Gilad Shir, told Palestinian negotiator Erekat that the Israeli security cabinet had decided not to change the criteria for releasing prisoners set by the previous Government and would therefore only be releasing a limited number of security prisoners. According to the criteria applied, initially adopted by former Prime Minister Netanyahu's Government, no prisoners involved in a fatal attack, and prisoners belonging to opposition groups — regardless of the severity of the crime — would be released. Under the Wye agreement, Israel is committed to releasing 750 prisoners in three phases. However, the modalities of the release were never written and all agreement on the matter was worked out orally.

6. Question of the use of force

255. On 2 February, clashes were reported between Palestinian landowners and Israeli soldiers and settlers when bulldozers uprooted trees from 180 dunums of land belonging to six villages north of Ramallah. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 February)

256. On 3 February, members of the outlawed Kach group attacked an adviser to Yasser Arafat, Ahmed Tibi, as he was leaving the Magistrates Court at Jerusalem. Tibi suffered light bruises. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 February)

257. On 11 February, a 48-year-old Palestinian doctor, Naely Ayed, was stabbed in the chest on her way home in East Jerusalem and died shortly afterwards. The initial report blamed the murder on the notorious serial stabber who has been terrorizing the Palestinian community. But later, the Israeli police reported that a 22-year-old man, Mohamed Shalaan, from the village of Abu Dis had turned himself in when he learned that the murdered woman was not Jewish. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 February)

258. On 14 February, hundreds of Palestinians blocked the Gush Katif junction in the Gaza Strip before being dispersed by the Palestinian police at IDF's request. Palestinian activist Wajih Abu Zarifa stated that the road closure was intended "to tell the settlers that we are able to make their lives difficult if they continue their aggressive policies against our land". The IDF spokesperson said that IDF had prevented hundreds of Palestinians from joining the marchers by blocking off the road with an army truck. It was reported that IDF and Palestinian police traded punches during the incident. Shortly afterwards, officers from both sides arrived on the scene and ordered their troops to lower their guns. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 15 February)

259. An Israeli police report revealed that nationalistically motivated riots against Israeli police in East Jerusalem had increased in 1998. The recently published report indicated that there had been a 24 per cent increase in the number of stone throwings and 2,203 Molotov cocktails were hurled at Israeli vehicles during 1998 as compared with 1,778 in 1997. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 February)

260. On 28 February, a Palestinian was injured by rubber-coated metal bullets fired by Israeli troops. The clashes occurred when IDF troops tried to prevent Palestinians from demolishing a road newly paved by settlers from the Avni Hefets settlement in the northern West Bank. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 March)

261. On 1 March, IDF soldiers shot and moderately wounded a Palestinian man when they opened fire on a car with Palestinian license plates near Mavo Horon. The IDF spokesperson stated that the driver had "tried to break through an army checkpoint, endangering the lives of soldiers". (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 March)

262. On 3 March, it was reported that the family of Zaki Obeid, the East Jerusalem resident who was shot and killed by the police, had filed for damages with the Jerusalem District Court. Obeid, 21, was killed six weeks earlier during the demolition of a home located in the East Jerusalem

neighbourhood of Issawiyal. After an internal investigation, the police concluded that the shooting was a mistake and apologized to the family. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 March)

263. On 3 March, it was reported that the Israeli Civil Police and the Israeli Border Police had prepared a plan in the event that Palestinian Authority President Arafat declared an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. The code name selected for the plan is "Magic of the Melody". Forces had already begun intensive training to prepare for the plan's possibie implementation. The training includes courses for snipers, as well as mandatory two-day exercises for all Border Police units, entailing practice in riot control, the firing of weapons for dispersing demonstrators, and combat in open terrain. (*Ha'aretz*, 3 March)

264. On 4 March, a Palestinian woman was injured near the village of Halhoul after being overcome by tear gas fired by IDF to disperse protesters. According to IDF, about 50 Palestinians had tried to cut down street lights around the perimeter of the Karmei Tzur settlement. (*Jerusalem Post*, 5 March)

265. On 7 March, according to a Jerusalem police spokesperson, a Palestinian taxi driver was knifed by ultra-orthodox assailants. Israel Radio stated that the driver had sustained moderate injuries. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, hundreds of policemen were to strengthen the Jerusalem police force following a wave of nationalistically motivated stabbings. In another incident, two border policemen were lightly injured by stones thrown at them near the Kalandia refugee camp in the Ramallah area. Near the Ofra settlement, a border policeman, another Israeli, and nine Palestinians were injured in a car crash that was apparently caused by stone-throwing. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 March)

266. On 7 March, the Israeli Supreme Court denied an appeal by settler Arieh Fisher, 50, from Neve Dekalim in the Gush Katif settlement bloc to overturn his conviction for the attempted murder of two Palestinians and to reduce his prison sentence of two and a half years. Fisher was convicted by the Be'er Sheva' District Court of pointing his pistol and firing seven shots at two Palestinians who passed the settlement in a jeep. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 March)

267. On 7 March, in a precedent-setting decision, the Supreme Court ruled that a man from Khan Yunis who was injured by ' excessive fire" of undercover IDF troops was entitled to compensation from the State. The decision rejected an appeal submitted by the State after the Jerusalem District Court established its own precedent by awarding one million NIS in compensation. The incident occurred five years earlier, at a roadblock in the village of Beit Ommar, near Hebron. The shooting victim, Zawid Badar, was masked, dressed as a "Ninja" and in the proximity of a pile of burning tires when he was spotted by IDF troops. As Badar fled, the soldiers called in Arabic for him to stop. After he failed to heed warning shots, the soldiers fired — in the dark — approximately 10 bullets at the lower part of his body. Badar sustained debilitating injuries, including partial paralysis of his leg. In rejecting the appeal, the Justices said that there was no justification for several soldiers to fire simultaneously. (*Ha'aretz*, 8 March)

268. On 8 March, the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights, PICCR, revealed in its report that 37 Palestinians were killed in 1998 by IDF, settlers or as a result of torture in prisons. The report also included chapters on Israeli violations of human rights. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 12 March)

269. On 11 March, it was reported that, in the first claim of its kind, residents of a West Bank village had asked the Jerusalem District Court to order the State to pay them tens of thousands of shekels in compensation for an attack on them by settlers five years earlier. The plaintiffs stated that the State was negligent because police had failed to investigate the incident. According to the plaintiffs, they were attacked by settlers protesting the murder of Jewish settler Haim Mizrachi. Their car was sabotaged and one of them was injured. Although they filed a complaint, 15 months later the police told the plaintiffs that the case had been closed because no suspects had been found. It was later revealed that, apart from taking testimony from the victims about the damages, the police had done nothing; this despite the fact that a senior IDF officer had taken down the license plate number of one of the Israeli vehicles involved, and given it to the police. (*Ha'aretz*, 11 March)

270. On 2 April, it was reported that the Israeli Government had appealed a recent High Court decision interpreting rules of combat engagement. Two weeks earlier, the High Court granted more than NIS 1 million in damages to Bader Ahlail, a Palestinian man who was wounded by IDF troops in October 1994. Four to five bullets struck the lower part of Ahlail's body as he tried to escape from a unit of undercover IDF soldiers. The High Court ruling interpreted IDF rules of engagement as allowing that for shooting of suspected rioters in occupied territories to take place only in single rounds. The fact that Ahlail was struck by at least four bullets, the court declared, showed that he was shot by multiple rounds. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 April)

271. On 14 April, the Israeli army rampaged through scores of houses and stores in the Shweike neighbourhood in

Tulkarm during a four-hour search for stolen cars. Palestinian newspapers reported extensive damage to property. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

272. On 1 May, two Palestinian children were injured near the Cave of Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque) in Hebron, one of whom seriously. The incident occurred when a border policeman stationed outside the Cave fired his weapon. While the IDF spokesperson stated that the shooting was an accident, one of the two victims, Jawad Muhtaseb, 13, told *Associated Press* before he was taken to hospital that the policeman had shot them deliberately. (*Jerusalem Post*, 2 May)

273. On 4 May, young Palestinians in Hebron and Ramallah pelted Israeli military checkpoints with stones. Some 17 youths were injured by rubber-coated bullets fired by Israeli soldiers during clashes organized by groups opposed to the Oslo accords. Leaflets circulating in the Gaza Strip rejected any delay in the establishment of a Palestinian state. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 7 May)

274. On 12 May, it was reported that during the previous month, IDF had begun training at a new facility that simulates a West Bank village. The facility was intended to allow troops to practice taking over Palestinian villages. In addition to staging confrontations with armed adversaries, the training grounds also offer practice dealing with women, children and journalists. During the last year, IDF increased training for all units in order to prepare for a possible confrontation with the Palestinian Authority on or around 4 May, the date on which the Palestinians had considered declaring statehood. (*Ha'aretz*, 12 May)

275. On 15 May, it was reported that four Palestinians, including a cameraman, were wounded by rubber bullets when clashes erupted between 150 Palestinians and IDF troops near the Ayosh Junction on the outskirts of Ramallah. Clashes were also reported near Burkin village in the vicinity of Nabulus. Some 100 Palestinians protested against caravans recently being placed as a prelude to the establishment of a yeshiva on the site. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 16 May)

276. On 23 May, a pregnant Palestinian woman from Deir Qadis village lost her baby after inhaling tear gas fired by IDF troops during a confrontation with Palestinian demonstrators. A group of Deir Qadis residents tried to block bulldozers 50 m away from the edge of their village, located west of Ramallah. IDF troops were at the construction site, slated for a new Jewish neighbourhood, at Kiryat Sefer. Gush Shalom Movement activists stated that IDF troops entered the village and fired the tear gas that drifted into the homes. Several children reported feeling ill from the gas. (*Ha'aretz*, 24 May)

277. On 24 May, it was reported that during the previous week the Supreme Court had reversed a lower court ruling that absolved the Israeli Army of responsibility for wounding a 17-year-old Palestinian girl in the eye with a tear gas canister. The girl was injured 11 years earlier while she was holding her two-year-old cousin at the entrance of a United Nations-run clinic in the Al Amari refugee camp near Ramallah. She claimed that the Israeli soldiers fired out of malice. The Supreme Court accepted the State's argument that she had not substantiated her claim for malice. (*Ha'aretz*, 24 May)

278. On 25 May, Supreme Court Chief Justice Barak rejected a request by State Prosecutor Edna Arbel for another hearing before an expanded panel of justices regarding a split decision by the Court. The split decision had held that a West Bank resident was entitled to compensation from the IDF because of negligence by Israeli undercover military agents five years earlier. The two majority justices found that the undercover agents had not fired a single warning shot in their pursuit of Ziyad Ahliel, but instead fired 10 shots at the start. The Court ruled that such action was unjustified under the circumstances. Ahaliel was partially paralyzed by the shots. He filed a claim for damages and was awarded NIS 1 million by the Jerusalem District Court. (*Ha'aretz*, 26 May)

279. On 27 May, it was reported that a Border Patrol officer had been arrested on suspicion of assaulting and attempting to sexually molest three Palestinian minors the previous month. The three minors (aged 14, 15 and 16) had been arrested separately in Ramallah area on suspicion of throwing stones. The officer allegedly assaulted them after they refused to perform an obscene act on him. Two other soldiers who were present at the scene allegedly ignored the officer's behaviour. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 May)

280. On 2 June, it was reported that Hadassah Hospital had confirmed that it will continue to treat a 14-year-old Palestinian boy shot in the leg by an Israeli border policeman the month before while playing outside his home in Hebron, just across from the Cave of the Patriarchs (Ibrahimi Mosque). The father of Jawad Muhtased had claimed that the hospital told him that since neither Israel nor the Palestinian Authority had so far paid the $34,000 bill for treatment, additional treatment would be conditional on his ability to pay. Jawad and his sister were playing with a ball on 1 May when the shooting occurred. His leg was seriously injured and his sister was also injured by bullet fragments.

He was operated on at Hadassa Hospital and hospitalized for 12 days. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 June)

281. On 3 June, the State Attorney's Office filed an indictment against Eran Nakash, a border policeman charged with three counts of beating up and performing indecent acts on Palestinian detainees, including three minors, over the past three months. In the first incident, Nakash and two other border policemen were escorting three minor Palestinian detainees in handcuffs. According to the charge sheet, Nakash punched, slapped and kicked the youth, then pulled down his fly and ordered one of them to perform oral sex. When the youth refused, he beat him. Nakash also forced the three to sing a song that insulted the Islamic Faith and the Prophet Mohammed. Whenever they stopped singing, he allegedly beat them until they resumed. In another incident, Nakash ordered a Palestinian out of his car because he was not carrying his identity papers. While the man's brother drove home to bring back the document, Nakash allegedly beat him, brought a lit cigarette close to his ear and, on one occasion, actually burned him. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 4 June)

282. On 3 June, a Palestinian man was killed and several others wounded in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as Palestinians marked the "Day of Anger" against settlement expansion. The day's fatality occurred in the morning, when Ala Abu Sharkh, 22, from Dahariya, was shot by a soldier at a roadblock near Hebron. Abu Aharkh died of his wounds at Soroka Hospital at Beersheba. Another Palestinian was wounded seriously in a clash near Burqin in the West Bank. The impetus of the "Day of Anger" was the previous week's decision by the outgoing Government to expand Ma'aleh Adumim to the borders of Jerusalem. Groundwork for a Jewish section in Jerusalem's Ras Al Amud neighbourhood and the start of construction at Har Homa in East Jerusalem also incited Palestinian protest. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz* 4 June)

283. On 5 June, it was reported that IDF troops dispersed scores of Palestinians who threw stones and bottles at IDF troops stationed at Rachel's Tomb near the entrance to Bethlehem. The Palestinians had earlier staged a protest rally in Bethlehem. According to reports, one Palestinian woman was seriously wounded by a rubber bullet. Fifteen Palestinians were wounded in sporadic clashes with the IDF during the "Day of Anger", which the Palestinian Authority allegedly called for in order to send a message to Barak that peace and settlement building are incompatible. The demonstrations, however, were generally peaceful and poorly attended. "The Palestinian people have shown self-control in protests on the Day of Rage and have expressed concern for peace, but they have also clearly indicated that they will not give up one grain of sand of their land", the Palestinian Authority Cabinet stated. (*Jerusalem Post*, 6 June)

284. On 3 June, Ala Abu Sharkh, 20, was apparently shot dead by IDF after he travelled on a bypass road to avoid an army checkpoint. Palestinian reports suggest that a settler armed with an Uzi machine gun had fired in the direction of the car as it drove along the unpaved road. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 11 June)

285. On 20 July, IDF troops opened fire with rubber bullets to disperse scores of Palestinian demonstrators who stoned troops and passing Israeli vehicles as they blocked the Netzarim Junction in the northern Gaza Strip. The IDF spokesperson stated that there were no casualties, although Palestinian reporters stated that nine people were injured. Medical workers at the scene stated that two demonstrators were slightly wounded; seven others were treated locally for slight wounds. Shafik Talouli, a protest organizer, stated that "the demonstration today is to protest Israeli settlement activities and to send a message to Prime Minister Barak that settlement activities should be stopped". (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 21 July)

286. On 21 July, it was reported that Palestinian policemen detained and subsequently released two IDF soldiers who they said had opened fire on a Palestinian officer in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian witnesses and officials said that the two soldiers, who were on a joint patrol with Palestinian policemen near Netzarim, fired towards a Palestinian policeman after an argument. No one was injured. (*Jerusalem Post*, 22 July)

287. On 22 July, Gaza Brigadier General Yoav Gallant suspended a border policeman for improperly firing his weapon and ordered disciplinary charges brought against several officers for failing to properly prepare their troops. Gallant's action followed an inquiry into a scuffle between border policemen and Palestinian policemen at the Netzarim junction the previous day in which two border policemen suffered light injuries Palestinian policemen snatched the weapon of a border policeman who fired into the air to disperse the Palestinians. The IDF spokesperson stated that the border policeman had failed to obey the open-fire regulations. (*Jerusalem Post*, 23 July)

288. On 20 July, 13 Palestinians were hurt in the Gaza Strip following clashes with IDF. The clashes occurred near Netzarim, an Israeli settlement near Gaza, after the Young Fatah Movement organized a demonstration against Israel's settlement policy. The 13 sustained moderate to light injuries after Israeli soldiers fired at them, using rubber-coated bullets. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 23 July)

289. On 22 July, the Islamic Wakf closed the Temple Mount to all visitors for the day following a scuffle between Palestinians and a group of the Temple Mount Faithful. During the scuffle, several former Kach activists threw leaflets into the compound calling for the "expulsion of all aliens". Police arrested three for incitement and sought their remand in the Jerusalem Magistrate Court. Wakf director Adnan Husseini stated that the decision to close the site followed an attack by "hundreds" of Jewish worshippers who tried to "attack the mosque". "Our guards and people stopped them and remained there all night to protect the area", he stated. Temple Mount Faithful leader Gershon Salomon stated that it was unacceptable that Jews be barred from the site. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 23 July)

290. On 8 August, Deputy Defence Minister Ephraim Sneh stated during a visit to Hebron's Jewish settlers that there were more IDF soldiers on patrol in Hebron than in all of the "Security Zone" which Israel had created in southern Lebanon. According to foreign reports, Israel deploys between 1,000 and 1,500 troops in south Lebanon. Settlers retorted that the soldiers were not there only to protect their enclave of some 400 people among 100,000 Palestinians, but also to protect the "hundreds of thousands" of visitors who come to Hebron every year. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 9 August)

291. On 10 August, one Israeli soldier was seriously wounded and five others and a civilian were lightly to moderately hurt, when a Palestinian man drove into them at the Nahshon junction. It was reported that the Palestinian man was killed. However, it was unclear whether police shot him to death or whether he was killed when his car crashed into a truck parked at the intersection. According to an IDF spokesperson, "Fearing that the vehicle was a 'car bomb', the armed personnel fired at the terrorist and killed him." In another attack late in the evening, an Israeli man was shot and moderately wounded near the entrance to the Mevo Motan settlement, South-East of Jenin in the West Bank. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 11 August)

292. On 11 August, it was reported that two Palestinians and an Israeli policeman were injured during clashes that occurred while Israeli policemen carried out a demolition order against two Palestinian houses in the Walaje neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Palestinian eyewitnesses stated that police struck them with guns as they approached the houses in a bid to prevent their demolition. Two Palestinians were injured, according to the owner of one of the destroyed houses. Police arrested a 13-year-old boy for throwing stones. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 12 August)

293. On 15 August, it was reported that a Justice Ministry investigation had determined that the commanders' mistakes during the demolition of houses in the village of Isawiyah in East Jerusalem had led to a man's death. Zaki Ubaid, a 22-year-old father of one from Isawiyah, died after being shot by border police during the incident. Interior Ministry personnel came to the village located in East Jerusalem in January 1999 escorted by soldiers and border police and equipped with an order for the destruction of illegal structures. According to a testimony gathered by the human rights organization B'Tselem, the shooting was from a range of 10-15 m, not the 40-m minimum limit, and was thereby illegal. The investigation failed to determine who had fired the fatal shot since rubber bullets cannot be ballistically traced to a specific gun, but it placed criminal responsibility on the commanders who were responsible for the operation and for not observing regulations regarding distance from which rubber bullets may be fired. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 August)

294. On 16 August, Jerusalem District Court Judge Ruth Orr cleared settlement security officer Nahum Korman of manslaughter charges in the death of 11-year-old Palestinian boy Holmi Shosha. Orr wrote that there was no reliable evidence to prove that Korman had struck Hilmi Shosha, a resident of Houssan village, or had made any bodily contact with him before he was hurt. In making the ruling, Orr rejected the testimony of two Palestinian youths, Ibrahim and Tahir Shousha, who claimed to have seen Korman kick their cousin in the thigh and temple, stomp on his throat and then strike him with his pistol. She also rejected the findings of Chief Coroner Yehuda Hiss; who said that after watching a recreation of the witnesses' version of events, he believed that the two signs of violence evident on the body, one of which had led directly to the boy's death, had been caused by the pistol blow and the stomping. Korman said that Shosha had fallen as he was approaching him. The security officer from the Hadar settlement near Jerusalem had entered the village to stop youths from stoning Israeli cars on the road below. The human rights organization B'Tselem, which collected testimony immediately after Shosha's death, criticized the decision, saying that it was part of a trend of negligent handling of cases involving Israeli citizens who injured Palestinians. Knesset Member Ahmad Tibi said that the decision "cast a heavy shadow on the Israeli justice system. Arabs, apparently, are never murdered, even when the identity of the murderer is known". (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 17 August)

7. Proposed law absolving persons of liability to compensate

295. On 2 July, it was reported that an 18-year-old tourist of Palestinian origin, Yacob Khalil, was demanding a million shekels in damages for the injuries he sustained when IDF opened fire at him. The shooting took place in the village of Ein Yabrud on 2 April 1992. A group of Israeli soldiers opened fire at him without warning. Khalil's left leg had to be amputated. In his complaint to the Central Court, Khalil was demanding compensation for the psychological suffering and expensive treatment he received in the United States. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 2 July)

8. Aspects of the administration of justice

296. On 3 February, Israeli President Ezer Weizman announced his decision to commute the sentence of eight Jews serving long prison terms for murdering or attempting to kill Palestinians. In doing so he was accepting the recommendations submitted to him by Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi the week before. Among the convicted Jews on the list were: (a) Ami Popper, who gunned down seven Palestinian workers from Gaza Strip in May 1990; Popper's original sentence of seven consecutive life terms in prison was reduced to 40 years; he was given vacation and visiting rights and the possibility of his sentence being reduced by a third for good behaviour, leaving him to serve 20 years in prison; Popper became an ultra-orthodox Jew while in prison; (b) Yoram Shkulnik, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1993 for murdering a Palestinian whose hands and legs were bound; in 1997, his sentence was commuted to 15 years; Weizman reduced it by another 45 months and he will be out of jail in another year; (c) Daniel Morali, sentenced to life imprisonment in February 1996 for murdering a Palestinian, will serve only 20 years following Weizman's recent decision; (d) Avraham Vaknin, who received a life sentence in 1991 for the murder of a Palestinian, had his term reduced to 15 years. The Palestinian Authority expressed its anger at President Weizman's reduction of the sentences of the seven (eight according to *Ha'aretz*) Israelis convicted of killing Palestinians. It said that this would encourage other extremists to attack Palestinians and charged that Israel had double standards concerning release of prisoners. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 February)

297. On 3 February, a scuffle broke out in the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court between Dr. Ahmed Tibi, an adviser to the Palestinian Authority President Arafat, and a handful of right-wing activists headed by Noam Federman of the outlawed right-wing Kach movement. The incident occurred after the Magistrate Judge finished reading an indictment against Tibi for allegedly attacking a border policemen the year before at a roadblock near the West Bank village of Surda. Speaking to reporters after the scuffle, Tibi charged that it was "scandalous" that the court guards didn't come to his defence and that he was forced to rely on his private bodyguard for protection. On the other hand, Federman said that "... we merely dealt with them in the spirit of Kahane. We came here to say that Tibi is a murderer and a spy". (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 4 February)

298. On 6 February, the Jerusalem District Court rejected an appeal submitted by the State against a Magistrates Court decision to release two Kach movement activists. The two were arrested the week before after being involved in a scuffle with Ahmed Tibi, an advisor to the Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, who was charged for allegedly attacking Israeli border police. Nevertheless, the court imposed house arrests on the two suspects until 9 February. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 February)

299. On 9 February, the Jerusalem District Attorney indicted three former Kach members for their outburst in court some days earlier. The three scuffled with Ahmad Tibi, advisor to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. The indictment stated that, had Tibi been hurt in the incident, it could have caused an "enormous uproar ... in the entire region". (*Jerusalem Post*, 10 February)

300. On 22 February, the High Court of Justice decided that a compromise should be reached regarding a petition filed by the family of Baruch Goldstein to preserve his gravesite as it is now. In 1994, Goldstein killed 29 Palestinians in the Ibrahimi Mosque (Tomb of the Patriarchs). Goldstein's family petition followed an IDF decision to remove the shrine and all symbols glorifying Goldstein's massacre which had sprung up around Goldstein's burial place in the Kiryat Arba settlement. The IDF decision was taken after the Knesset passed a law forbidding memorials to terrorists. In related news, it was reported that the Peace Now movement will hold a protest at Baruch Goldstein's grave, calling for the removal of the memorial there. A Peace Now spokesperson charged it was inconceivable that a law to this effect passed by the Knesset had not been enforced. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 February, *Jerusalem Post*, 25 February)

301. On 23 February, in a rare act of public criticism, three Supreme Court Judges criticized strongly a District Court as they overturned a conviction that they labelled as a "miscarriage of justice". In issuing its critical ruling, the Supreme Court acquitted Palestinian detainee Nidal Abu Sa'ada of murder charges. The case involved charges that while in administrative detention in Megiddo jail, Sa'ada

was involved with a group of Hamas activists in the beating and murder of a fellow prisoner, Abed Rahman Kilani, whom they suspected of collaborating with the prison Authority. The prosecution enlisted the help of one of the prisoners, to serve as a State witness in the case, but over the course of several months this witness changed his version of events several times. The prosecution eventually brought only the last version to court, and Public Security Minister issued a gag order on all previous versions of the State witness' testimony. Sa'ada served two years in prison prior to the Supreme Court's overturning of the District Court decision. (*Ha'aretz*, 24 February)

302. On 11 May, the High Court of Justice ruled that the three Orient House offices ordered to be closed by the Government should remain open until after the upcoming election. Justice Dalia Dornir gave both sides until 18 May to respond to a petition filed by nine Jewish Jerusalemites who claimed that the closure was a purely political manoeuvre by Prime Minister Netanyahu on the eve of the elections. Jerusalem Mayor Olmert was critical of Netanyahu's handling of the issue. He told Israel Radio that he had warned Netanyahu against closing Orient House such a short period before the elections. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 12 May)

303. On 9 June, the Tel-Aviv District Court rejected a petition by brothers Yehoyada and Eitan Kahalani for early release from jail. The two brothers were convicted of attempted murder of a Palestinian in February 1994 and of illegal possession of weapons. The two had been sentenced to 12 years in jail, but the sentences were later reduced to eight years for each by President Ezer Weizman. (*Ha'aretz*, 10 June)

304. On 13 July, Justice Minister Yossi Beilin, in his first major act as minister, appointed a committee to look into cancelling the state of emergency that has existed in Israel since its birth 51 years ago. "It is appropriate that today ... laws still exist that may be convenient for the Government, but have no justification for still being on the book", Beilin stated. Unless the Knesset extends it, the state of emergency will expire automatically on 1 February 2000. Some 14 laws relating to the state of emergency would be replaced if the state of emergency were cancelled. Five of the laws would be automatically replaced without possibility of renewal. Among the nine laws that could be renewed with a new declaration of state emergency are the emergency directives concerning arrests, which permit administrative detention; the law governing emergency searches; the Anti-Terror Ordinance; a law governing supervision of supplies and services; and a law enabling the appropriation of land during a state of emergency. (*Ha'aretz*, 14 July)

Military courts

305. On 12 April, the military court in Lydda sentenced Hamas spokesman Jamal Abu Hija, of Jenin, to 13 months in prison and a $350 fine for being a member of Hamas. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

306. On 28 April, *Ha'aretz* reported that IDF had decided to close the Lod Military Court and transfer its workload to the civil court system. Lod Court processes charges against Palestinians from the occupied territories for acts of terror in Israel. The Military Advocate-General, General Ilan Schiff, stated that "... in a country that has reached the age of 51", and in a justice system like Israel's, "it is improper" to try civilians in military court, even if they are alleged terrorists. However, this does not hold true in the occupied territories, where international law requires that civilians be tried in military court. The Lod Military Court has operated under the Defence Emergency Regulations of 1945 created during the British Mandate. The Lod Court was authorized to handle alleged terrorist offenses, such as the use of explosives or membership in illegal organizations within Israel's borders. Thousands of cases were heard in the Court since the 1967 war, primarily against Palestinians from the territories, but also against Druze from the Golan Heights. (*Ha'aretz*, 28 April)

Representation by Palestinian lawyers

Intelligence files to which no access is possible

D. Economic, social and cultural effects that such a general system of regulation and the manner of its enforcement has on the lives of the people of the occupied territories

1. Introduction

307. On 5 March, it was reported that life in a Palestinian village, Tora Al Gharbiyeh, adjacent to the Green Line in Ya'bad, had become unbearable for its residents because of a nearby Israeli stonecutter. The dust generated by the quarry's activities has been the cause of chronic chest conditions among residents and has been responsible for severe damage to olive trees and livestock. Several accidents were reported due to poor visibility in the area. The foundations of nearby houses are seriously affected by the explosions from the quarry. The residents of Tora appealed to the PA and human rights institutions to intervene in order to close the plant and limit its devastating public health impact. Residents also reported frequent harassment by the

Israeli occupation forces and Jewish settlers who want them to leave their land. Under the protection of Israeli occupation forces, the Jewish settlers prevent the farmers and shepherds from reaching their farms by declaring the land "a closed military area". As a result, the quality of the livestock, local greenery and pasture land has deteriorated. Local residents also complain about an extremely bad infrastructure due to the Israeli occupation. Furthermore, IDF prevented the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction to pave the street which connects several Palestinian villages on the grounds that the street is located in Israeli-controlled Area C. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 March)

308. On 4 June, it was reported that Israeli High Court judge, Dalia Dorner, had asked the Government of Israel to notify the Court within 14 days if the Government is still insisting on closing Orient House and if there is any justification for the petition against the closure. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 4 June)

309. On 4 July, it was reported that Member of Knesset Yossi Beilin (One Israel Party) suggested in an interview with an international Arabic newspaper that under the final status agreement, while Jerusalem would remain under Israeli sovereignty, the Palestinian Authority should be allowed control over the Temple Mount area. He explained that this would simply formalize an already existing situation. Following the publication of the interview, the Likud Party called on Prime Minister-elect Barak to condemn Beilin's statements, and to bar him from any ministerial post. Barak's office, in turn, stated that the incoming Government would be committed to "... the unity and wholeness and sovereignty of Jerusalem ... Barak's government, in line with the basic principles it has set for itself, will work to develop and better Jerusalem, and will continue to build the city for the benefit of the citizens". Beilin stood behind his statements, clarifying that "in any final status agreement, Israel will ensure the unity of Jerusalem, but at the same time will maintain a sensitivity to the municipal, religious, and symbolic needs of non-Jews within the city". (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 4 July)

310. On 15 July, it was reported that security officials guided a group of 40 Palestinian businessmen around the Haifa port and introduced them to staff working there in the hope of encouraging Palestinian exports. An Israeli spokesperson stated that the visit was aimed at decreasing reliance on costly and time consuming middlemen. The spokesperson stated that there have also been efforts to encourage Palestinian businessmen to use the Ashdod port. The Palestinian Authority plans to open a port in Gaza City. (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 July)

311. On 20 July, Minister of Interior Security, Shlomo Ben Ami, stated that he intended to recommend that the three Orient House offices ordered closed by the previous Government remain open. Ben Ami stated that he had determined that the Palestinians had carried out no political activity from the offices and the Palestinian Authority had paid no salaries and given no other financial support to the offices. However, speaking to reporters, Ben Ami stated that the current Government upholds the previous Government's policy in affirming that Orient House cannot be the centre of any political activity. Shortly before the 17 May elections, then premier Binyamin Netanyahu ordered the offices closed. On 11 May, the High Court ruled that they would remain open until after the election. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20, 22 July)

312. On 20 July, the High Court of Justice ruled that Israel Police, in principle, should allow small groups of the right-wing Temple Mount Faithful organization to visit the Temple Mount site. The head of the Temple Mount Faithful had sought permission to hold a prayer service and recite the Book of Lamentations on the day that commemorates the destruction of the two temples. (*Jerusalem Post*, 21 July)

2. Adults

313. On 2 February, it was reported that Israel threatened to halt operations at the Gaza International Airport if Palestinian security officials continued obstructing the duties of Israeli security personnel. The Palestinian officials said that they have not violated the protocol regarding the airport. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 February)

314. On 4 February, some 50 heads of more than over 20 Palestinian and Israeli subcommittees dealing with civilian issues between Israelis and Palestinians met in Ramallah. The committees were set up under the Oslo agreement and reestablished under the Wye River memorandum to deal with topics such as the environment, electricity, water, communications and transportation. Issues touched upon at the gathering included, *inter alia*: the water infrastructure (Israel will approve the laying of five central water pipes which will enable Palestinians to link some 50 villages in the West Bank to water mains); the import of used cars (the Israeli Transportation Ministry is drawing up regulations to allow Palestinians to import used cars, which had previously been forbidden; it hopes that enabling Palestinians to import used cars will result in a decline in auto theft); communications (there is a clear problem created by the Palestinian Authority having been granted its own international telephone dialling code; a telephone call from

Ramallah to Jerusalem has become an international call). (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 5 February)

315. On 15 February, Israel prevented Palestinian Authority officers from collecting taxes from truck drivers passing through the Karni crossing. The taxes were described by Israel as "protection money" for Palestinian security mechanisms. As a result of the dispute, the crossing was closed for several hours. The new cargo terminal at Karni was opened last December after numerous delays. It replaced an outdated terminal where each crossing truck had to be emptied of all its cargo for a security check before being reloaded. The new terminal is equipped with sophisticated x-ray machines which enable the trucks to be checked without unloading their cargo. The terminal was later reopened, but the atmosphere at the site reportedly remained unpleasant. (*Ha'aretz*, 16 February)

316. On 1 March, it was reported that according to Shlomo Dror, Coordinator of Government Activities in the West Bank and Gaza, approximately 100,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip — out of a total population of about 2.5 million Palestinians — were allowed to enter Israel during routine, "non-hermetic" closures. Approximately 50,000 of them are day labourers, 20,000 to 30,000 are merchants, and the remainder are drivers, students, Palestinian Authority employees and the like. About 50,000 to 60,000 "illegal" day labourers enter Israel during routine closures. During a closure, a large percentage of these manage to make their way into Israel. Dror stated that most of these "illegal" workers were once again in Israel. He added that Israel had decided not to use the "continuous employment" programme it had used in the past, which grants permit holders immunity from closures. He stated that the programme was not needed because the present closure was expected to remain in effect only through the end of the Purim festival. According to a *Ha'aretz* reporter, Palestinians who work in Israel constitute a significant portion of the Palestinian workforce, which numbers about 550,000 people, so the economic impact of a closure is felt within a few days. A "hermetic" closure allows for the passage of most food and other goods across the Palestinian-Israeli border crossing. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 March)

317. On 2 March, it was reported that in 1998 the Interior Ministry had stripped 788 Palestinian Jerusalemites of their residency rights. While Palestinians view the Ministry policy as a "silent transfer", Interior Ministry officials claim that they were only abiding by the law. Human Rights groups B'Tselem and HaMoked, the Centre for the Defence of the Individual, issued a report in September 1998 entitled "The quiet transfer continues", in which they explain that the Israeli policy is aimed at reducing the number of Palestinians in the city. Specific methods include land expropriation and discriminatory investment in urban infrastructure in Palestinian neighbourhoods. Limits on building permits for Palestinians in Jerusalem have led to a huge housing shortage, forcing them to move outside the city to areas that Israel had not yet annexed. The policy began in the days of the Labour administration, following the Oslo II agreement, when natives of Jerusalem who had spent some years out of the country were stripped of their residency rights. Since the end of 1995, Jerusalemites who had moved out of the city due to lack of housing were defined as people "whose centre of life moved beyond the boundaries of Jerusalem", so their "right" to residency in the city lapsed. People who spent time abroad for work or study were also stripped of their right to residency in the city, while those with dual citizenship were forced to choose between the foreign passport and the right to live in Jerusalem. (*Ha'aretz*, 2 March)

318. On 5 March, it was reported that according to the Palestinian Superintendent for Refugee Affairs, Asaad Abdul Rahman, UNRWA services to the Palestinian refugees had declined by 35 per cent since the signing of the Oslo accords. Asaad cautioned against the potential instability that could be caused by such cutbacks. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 5 March)

319. On 23 March, it was reported that Defence Minister Arens had announced several measures to ease conditions for residents of the West Bank, on the occasion of the upcoming Moslem holiday of Eid Al Adha. During the holiday, the Defence establishment was to allow an increase in the number of relatives from the West Bank and Gaza visiting prisoners in Israeli jails. In addition, some 1,600 Palestinian families received family reunification permits, and some 170 students received permission to enter the West Bank from Gaza. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 23 March)

320. On 24 March, it was revealed that intelligence reports which were recently submitted to Prime Minister Netanyahu described the existence of a "parallel government" working alongside the Israeli Government in Arab Jerusalem. Some of the clandestine Palestinian Government's activity is allegedly motivated by the Palestinian Authority's desire to establish sovereignty in the city. According to the reports, the positive response of Arabs in East Jerusalem to the "parallel government" activities derives primarily from the tremendous vacuum Israel had created over the past few decades in services and infrastructure on the eastern side of the capital. Orient House in East Jerusalem has extended a health insurance plan to about 3,000 families, or an estimated 15,000 people. The insurance was initially targeted at Palestinians who had been denied or lost their identity cards, or who had lost their eligibility for health insurance from the Israeli National Insurance Institute. Orient House

also funds private and Islamic education for impoverished East Jerusalem residents. (*Ha'aretz*, 24 March)

321. On 26 March, it was reported that Palestinians had protested against the construction of two Israeli industrial areas at Jenin and Qalqilya because they were built at the expense of agricultural land. The Palestinian Authority Minister of Industry also rejected the idea of an Israeli industrial area at Al Ram, saying that he considered it a provocative measure that violates the Oslo agreements. Israel is also creating obstacles in the operations of the Jenin industrial area. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 26 March)

322. On 11 April, it was reported that the National Insurance Institute had decided to immediately grant medical benefits to Palestinians who returned to live in Jerusalem after residing in nearby West Bank communities, changing its policy of the past four years. Previously, Jerusalem residency rights — with the associated social benefits — expired seven years after an individual left the city. The change in policy was expressed in the response of Interior Minister Eli Suissa to a High Court appeal by five human rights organizations and 14 Palestinian, which contested the cancellation of thousands of Palestinians' residency rights. The appeal was set for 22 April. Suissa's response stated that "In the event that a resident moved to a neighbouring settlement very close to the municipal borders of Jerusalem — that is, he lived in greater Jerusalem — and the centre of his life in every respect (work, medical treatment, education and so on) continued to be in Israel, then the Interior Ministry would not say that the residency of such people has expired." Palestinians born in Jerusalem were recognized as permanent residents following the city's annexation in 1967. Permanent residency status, unlike citizenship, can expire. The Attorney General ruled in 1995 that the West Bank and Gaza are outside of Israel for purposes of permanent residency rights. Thus, under the previous policy, many Palestinians who moved out of the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem due to a severe housing shortage lost their residency rights after seven years. (*Ha'aretz*, 11 April)

323. On 14 April, it was reported that dozens of demonstrators had gathered in front of the New Gate in Jerusalem's Old City to protest the Interior Ministry's policy of confiscating identity cards of Palestinian Jerusalemites. The High Court of Justice was scheduled to hear the following week a petition filed by human rights groups in April 1998 concerning 15 cases of ID confiscation. Petitioners claimed that the confiscation policy had increased by some 600 per cent in the last four years. "While the whole world is talking about ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, it is taking place right here in Jerusalem", stated Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi. Human rights organizations state that, since 1996, the Interior Ministry had made it increasingly difficult for Palestinians to prove their links to the city. Authorities now demanded evidence that Jerusalem is the centre of their lives, including proof that all family members were born, reside, work, or attend school in Jerusalem. Proof must also be furnished of payment of utilities and property taxes. Between 1996 and 1998, ID cards of 2,083 families were confiscated. "This policy violates the Fourth Geneva Convention which states that when a foreign force occupies territories, it must grant the inhabitants irrevocable residency", stated Matthew Brubacher of Badil, the Research Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights. (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 April)

324. On 14 April, as part of the "Campaign to End ID Confiscation", some 50 persons took part in a demonstration near the New Gate in Jerusalem organized under the auspices of several Palestinian and Israeli Human Rights Organizations. The campaign seeks to alert the public about the High Court Ruling scheduled the following week, which will decide on the future of several Palestinian families threatened to be definitively expelled from their homes in Jerusalem. In an attempt to reduce the Arab population, the Israeli Government has confiscated 2,083 Jerusalem identity cards held by Palestinians. These cards, withdrawn since 1995, entitle each person to the full social benefits enjoyed by citizens of Israel. Through a manipulation of old laws, any Palestinian citizen who has left Jerusalem to live abroad or in the West Bank for seven years or more is not allowed to return to live in the city he was born in. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

325. On 3 May, it was reported that the Israeli Government had approved in principle a plan to erect a joint industrial park south of Nablus. Ya'acov Orr, the Government Coordinator of Activities in the Territories, stated that other industrial parks were also on the drawing board, such as a small hi-tech park in Tulkarm and another in Rafah. Orr spoke during a tour of the Karni crossing and the adjacent Gaza industrial zone, where over 400 people were employed in low-tech textile industries established under joint Israeli-Palestinian ventures. (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 May)

326. On 5 May, it was reported that Public Security Minister Kahalani had asked the team responsible for investigating Orient House for a report on the legal implications of closing three Palestinian offices operating at the East Jerusalem site. Faisal Husseini stated that Palestinians would not petition the Israeli High Court if police decided to close Orient House, because Palestinians do not recognize the Court's authority. (*Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, 6 May)

327. On 21 May, it was reported that various heads of Christian churches in Jerusalem vehemently rejected the proposal made by the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs to open a new gate to the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem. The Latin Patriarch, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch and the Armenian Patriarch all believe that the opening of the new gate would harm the current status quo in the church. A large number of tourists is expected to visit the Holy Sepulchre in the year 2000. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 21 May)

328. On 27 May, Supreme Court Chief Justice Barak strongly criticized the Government for refusing to restore the citizenship of Israeli women of Palestinian origin, revoked when they married Palestinians and moved to the occupied territories in the West Bank or Gaza. He gave the Interior Ministry 90 days to reconsider its "scandalous" policy. "Why did the Government have to revoke their citizenship in the first place?" asked Barak with obvious impatience. "I don't understand it. It is incompatible with any standards of fairness. Would anyone ask an Israeli Jew to give up his citizenship if he moved to one of the Israeli settlements in the territories?" During the previous year, the Court heard three petitions protesting the Ministry's policy. The petition claimed that Israeli Palestinian women had been told that if they wanted to receive an identity card for the territories — which they needed in order to receive basic services, including registration of their children — they would have to sign a form giving up their citizenship. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 28 May)

329. On 13 June, it was reported that Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein was expected to intervene on behalf of two Israeli employers in the West Bank in a dispute with Palestinian workers. The dispute over the wages and rights of these employees was being examined by the National Labour Court. The local council of the Givat Ze'ev settlement local council and the Abir textile factory in the Barakan industrial area had both appealed separate rulings by the Labour Court that required paying Palestinian workers according to Israeli law rather than Jordanian law. The Givat Ze'ev appeal rested on the argument that security regulations in the West Bank take precedence over other legislation, unless otherwise stipulated, and differential wages are permissible under these regulations. The Attorney General is authorized to intervene in such labour disputes if they involve the rights of the state of Israel or are of general public interest. The Worker's Hotline (Kav La'oved) non-profit organization was representing the Palestinian workers who had complained about receiving lower wages than their Israeli colleagues. (*Ha'aretz*, 13 June)

330. On 20 June, it was reported that a three-day meeting of Palestinian leaders earlier called on West Bank and Gaza Strip residents to stop working in the Jewish settlements "because settlements are a threat to our national existence". The call came less than a week after the Palestinian police began preventing workers from reaching their construction jobs in Gaza Strip settlements. While that measure was limited to Gaza and did not include agricultural labourers, the statement from the meeting of Palestinian leaders was aimed at all types of work in settlements throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Those working in the settlements — who number 11,000 according to the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Labour — say that they work at their jobs in order to support their families. They receive higher wages than construction workers in Palestinian areas. Palestinian officials said that they hoped to find alternative jobs for workers, but there were no indications of steps taken towards this end. The Ministry of Labour estimated unemployment to be at 20 per cent in the West Bank, and 26 per cent in the Gaza Strip. (*Jerusalem Post*, 20 June)

331. On 3 June, the "Day of Rage" was instituted by Palestinian leaders to protest Israeli settlement activities. Marches to plots of land slated for confiscation were organized and a commercial strike was observed in East Jerusalem. The Israeli police intensified their presence in the city to confront the Palestinian protesters. The Fatah organization called on Palestinian citizens to confront Israeli bulldozers at Jebel Abu Ghneim and Ras Al Amud. According to the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv, Israeli security officials warned against a possible eruption of violence in the West Bank in light of the recent escalation in settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 4 June)

332. On 9 June, a man tried to perform a Jewish prayer inside the Al Aqsa Mosque compound but was evicted by the Mosque guards. In reaction to this incident, the Wakf authority locked the gates to the Mosque and threatened to cancel all tourist visits to the compound. The Israeli High Court recently acquitted a number of Israelis who had been accused of illegally entering the Mosque compound. The Court also made a request to the Israeli prosecutor for a full explanation as to why it is illegal for religious Israelis to enter the mosque and perform prayers there. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 11 June)

333. On 18 June, it was reported that Palestinian security forces had begun preventing Palestinian workers from working in the Jewish settlements of the Gaza Strip. Reports indicate that Palestinian police are stopping workers on their way to three settlements there. The move is seen as a new measure to consolidate the Palestinian position on

settlements and send a message to the Israeli Government that the settlement issue continues to be a top priority for the Palestinian Authority. There are approximately 11,000 workers employed in Jewish settlements, according to Palestinian official estimates. The wages of Palestinian workers on Jewish settlements are three times higher than the average wage of a worker in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Palestinian unemployment figures range between 20 and 26 per cent. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 18 and 25 June)

334. On 2 July, it was reported that vehicles with Palestinian Authority licence plates were not allowed entry into Nablus through an Israeli army block as a counter-measure against banning Israelis from entering Joseph's Tomb at Nablus. Dozens of vehicles were stopped on the road. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 2 July)

335. On 20 July, Interior Minister Natan Sharansky stated that he favoured putting an end to the revocation of residency rights of Palestinians who have moved out of East Jerusalem. "I think the time has come to change this policy and stop cancelling the residency rights of residents of East Jerusalem", he told reporters during a visit to the Ministry's offices in East Jerusalem, adding that he would discuss the matter with Prime Minister Ehud Barak. National Infrastructure Minister Eli Suissa, Interior Minister in the previous Government, called Sharansky's proposal "irresponsible", warning that it could "endanger our status in Jerusalem". According to the human rights group B'Tselem, 788 people lost residency rights in 1998. B'Tselem said that it hoped to see an annulment of the law that had not been vigorously enforced until early 1996. More than 2,000 people lost their residency during the past three years in what was viewed by Palestinians as an attempt to alter the city's demographic balance and termed by some as "ethnic cleansing". Palestinian Authority legislator Hanan Ashrawi stated "It is a shame that [Sharansky] did not think of this earlier while he was serving the previous government. But it is something that we have been seeking. Putting an end to the policy is positive and we hope that they will return the identity cards of all those who have had theirs confiscated." (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 21 July)

336. On 22 July, it was reported that the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) had called on government ministries to improve the human-rights situation in the country, beginning with the finalization of a Constitution. According to ACRI, while legislation and judicial decisions regarding human rights have improved in recent years, discrimination still existed between Israeli Jews and Arabs. The rights of Palestinians were grossly violated, and the policy and actions of the Government regarding human rights have stood still or regressed. ACRI stated that over the last few years, the Interior Ministry had conducted a discriminatory policy against non-Jews. One of the areas in which this was most noticeable is family reunification. Even Israeli citizens who marry Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza have to live apart from their spouses for many years because of ministry regulations, and Palestinians born in East Jerusalem often lose their residency rights. ACRI emphasized the violation of human rights in the Palestinian sector, including use of violence against Palestinian detainees by General Security Services interrogators. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 22 July)

337. On 15 August, Deputy Minister of Defence Ephraim Sneh announced that Israel will increase the number of Palestinian labourers allowed into the country from the Gaza Strip. He maintained that Israel's security was enhanced when more Palestinians are earning money from jobs in Israel. "As long as the economic situation in the Strip is better, the willingness of the residents to carry out attacks will be reduced. So, we have an interest in a high standard of living there. While maintaining our security criteria regarding entry into Israel", Sneh stated during a tour of IDF bases in the Gush Katif settlement bloc and the friction points between Israelis and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Sneh stated that some 25,000 Gaza residents had permits to work in Israel. "We have to maintain this number, and if possible, to increase it in the future, so that the standard of living will be reasonable and rise gradually", he stated. Defence officials stated that they wanted to reach a situation where any married Palestinian over 22 who has a security clearance will be given a work permit. Currently some 60,000 persons from the Gaza Strip and West Bank have labour permits, but another 40,000 more enter illegally without permits. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 16 August)

3. Children

338. On 20 March, three Palestinian children were seriously injured when an explosive device detonated in a military training area near the West Bank village of Rantis. Two brothers, aged 12 and 11, and their cousin, aged 12, were hospitalized for treatment. One of the brothers lost his hand in the blast and was listed in critical condition. The IDF spokesperson said that there were signs posted at the entrance to the training area which forbade entry, but the Voice of Palestine radio and the Physicians for Human Rights association (PHR) claimed that there were no such signs. PHR has been claiming for years that IDF holds training exercises using live ammunition in dangerous proximity to Palestinian villages and grazing grounds. The last such accident occurred in October 1998 in the village of Al Zawyah, when a 16-year-old Palestinian was seriously

injured while picking olives in the family olive grove. (*Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz*, 21 March)

339. On 22 June, a 13-year-old Palestinian boy was killed and his companion badly injured near the village of Yatta, south of Hebron, apparently by explosives that detonated when the boys picked them up. Adam Hassan Musallam was killed and his 16-year-old companion, Muthqal Al-Amar, was taken to Alia Hospital in Hebron in critical condition after losing a leg and sustaining burns in the explosion. Village residents were convinced that the explosion was caused by the detonation of some sort of explosive charge, perhaps a hand grenade. According to the human rights organization B'Tselem, 30 Palestinians and one Israeli have been killed by ammunition found in or around IDF training grounds. Of those killed, 22 were children. Yatta is located approximately 10 km from a large training area. IDF, which is responsible for the area's security, stated that it was investigating circumstances surrounding the incident. (*Ha'aretz*, 23 June)

E. General sense of hopelessness and despair

340. On 24 February, leading Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat blasted the Knesset's decision to legalize Arutz 7, the pirate settler radio station, terming it a blow to reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians. "This station does nothing except incite against the peace process, the Palestinian Authority and against Palestinians. The decision reflects an ugly step against reconciliation", he said. He added that the decision came only a few days before a scheduled meeting in Washington of an American-Palestinian-Israeli committee against incitement. (*Jerusalem Post*, 25 February)

341. On 14 March, a commercial strike was observed by Palestinian shopkeepers in East Jerusalem, reflecting a divided city as a strong feeling is growing among Palestinians that they are losing ground in East Jerusalem. Most people in the city feel strangled. The absence of a Palestinian strategy and division among East Jerusalemites contribute to the feelings of helplessness. The closure imposed on the city isolates from the West Bank hinterland. In the 1970s and 1980s, East Jerusalem was, for all intents and purposes, the capital of the Palestinian people. It is a ghost city now. The city has been under closure for years. Hospitals are part of the Israeli health care system. Most Palestinian schools are under Israeli jurisdiction, West Bankers cannot come to visit, work, or even pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam. The Palestinian Authority has moved its newly opened offices to the West Bank. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 19 March)

342. On 16 April, *The Jerusalem Times* described the dilemma faced by almost all Palestinians who are directly or indirectly dependent on Israel for their livelihoods. The case of Salah Shahin is a clear illustration of this frustration. Shahin works as a tile-layer in the Gush Etzion settlement. He has no other choice. He said: "I own 54 dunums of land but I can't do anything with it. I cannot irrigate my own land because the settlement council in Gush Etzion does not supply me with water. I am building for them (the Israelis) but I cannot build for myself and for my family." Shahin's house is located in the Gush Etzion settlement Bloc and is surrounded by the settlement's red-roofed stone buildings. The 23 people in his extended family live in four rooms. "I'm not able to even put one brick over another", he added. The report concluded that many Palestinians are forced to "dig their own graves with their own hands". (*The Jerusalem Times*, 16 April)

343. On 15 June, diplomats from six Arab countries which have offices in Gaza did not attend a meeting with the Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Ekreme Sabri. Palestinian sources believe that Israel pressured the Arab diplomats not to come to a meeting in Jerusalem with a Palestinian official since such a gesture could be interpreted as meaning that the Palestinians were establishing a foothold in the city. The Mufti planned to talk about Israeli measures at the Al Aqsa Mosque and about the Israeli High Court's decision to allow extremist settlers to perform Jewish prayers at the Mosque. (*The Jerusalem Times*, 18 June)

344. On 27 July, Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker Ahmad Qurei voiced concern over Prime Minister Barak's handling of negotiations with the Palestinians, comparing his tactics to those of his predecessor, Binyamin Netanyahu. "He is wasting time and he is renegotiating issues that have already been signed", Qurei stated. He added that he was concerned that Barak will seek to draw out the deliberations of a committee formed that week on the implementation of the Wye agreement, and that its two-week mandate would be extended as a delaying tactic. (*Jerusalem Post*, 28 July)

Other

345. On 2 March, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories since 1967, Hannu Halinen, made public his report on the question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine. Overall, the human rights situation was deemed "worrying". "While there is a certain positive development to be recognized on the Israeli

side — such as the decrease in administrative detentions and discontinuation of the most flagrant torture methods — it appears that such violations are increasing on the Palestinian side", Halinen's report stated. "The pressure exercised by the occupying power on the Palestinian Authority, while explaining many violations, does not justify them, nor does it absolve the Palestinian Authority of its responsibility." The 17-page report will be considered by the 53-member Commission on Human Rights, which begins its annual six-week session at Geneva on 22 March to examine human rights violations worldwide. Halinen also stated that Israeli settlement activities and the building of bypass roads connecting the settlements to each other and to Israel was the source of greatest concern in the occupied territories. "The concerns have been exacerbated by the unilateral suspension by Israel on 2 December 1998 of implementation of the Wye River memorandum." (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 March)

346. On 9 March, it was reported that Knesset Member Benny Begin was the only one of four prime ministerial candidates to rise to a challenge from the human rights group B'Tselem and spell out his position on several issues pertaining to human rights in Israel. In a letter sent to the four candidates on 14 January, B'Tselem asked for their position on four major topics: the General Security Service's interrogation methods, house demolitions in the occupied territories, Government failure to open a safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and administrative detentions. B'Tselem also suggested that the candidates state their overall position on human rights. Begin's views will be published in the second issue of the quarterly publication of the Israeli Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 March)

347. On 14 March, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that he intends to begin final status talks with the Palestinians soon after the elections, and that he did not anticipate problems on territorial issues because "the Palestinians have lowered their expectations since I came into office". Netanyahu stated further that he would stand firm and ensure that "in light of Israel's security needs, the Palestinian Authority would not have the rights of a state in terms of maintaining an army or inviting a foreign army into its territory". Netanyahu has threatened in the past to annex parts of the West Bank if Arafat declares statehood. (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 March)

348. On 15 March, it was reported that, according to a report released by B'Tselem and HaMoked, the Centre for the Defence of the Individual, Israel held the bodies of 24 Palestinians who died either in suicide bombings or in clashes with IDF over the past five years. Since 1994, "a clear policy has been followed according to which bodies of terrorists are not returned to their families", the report declared. Previously, IDF had not taken a consistent approach towards the subject, it added. The two human rights groups also claimed that the way in which Israel had buried the bodies violated both the rules of international law and instructions of the IDF Chief of Staff. "(They) were buried in a contemptuous and negligent manner that casts doubt on the possibility of identifying the bodies in the future", the report stated. Spokespersons for the two groups condemned the policy as a violation of basic human values and international treaties. (*Ha'aretz*, *Jerusalem Post*, 16 March)

349. On 1 June, it was reported that a human rights organization had petitioned the High Court of Justice on behalf of three relatives of Sufian Sabeih, who had carried out a suicide attack on the Number 26 bus in Jerusalem four years earlier. It was claimed in the petition that the IDF usually buries the bodies of enemy forces in special cemeteries defined as closed military areas. The burials are carried out by members of the military rabbinate who are not familiar with Islamic law. The petition quoted Knesset deliberations on a law that prohibits the construction of memorials to terrorists. The Knesset recognized that the right to a grave and gravestone cannot be taken away, even from someone who carried out acts of terror. (*Ha'aretz*, 1 June)

350. On 4 July, Palestinian Authority President Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister Barak met on the Israeli side of the Beit Hanoun Junction. Arafat described the meeting as a new departure for the peace process. The summit led Barak to commit himself to the implementation of the Wye River memorandum, a step warmly welcomed in Palestinian circles. Addressing 40 heads of State gathered at Algiers for the opening session of the Organization of African Unity Conference on 5 July, Arafat declared: "A full Israeli withdrawal to the lines of June 1967: we shall agree to no less". (*The Jerusalem Times*, 9 July)

351. On 10 August, it was reported that the Israeli cabinet secretariat had agreed to release an Education Ministry survey on East Jerusalem schools prepared by a committee established in June 1997. According to the report, 30 per cent of pupils in the upper elementary school grades in East Jerusalem were illiterate, and there was a 40 per cent dropout rate from the secondary schools. The report describes serious pedagogical and physical problems in the system, which today serves 42,000 pupils. According to the report, the system was growing at a rate of 5 per cent a year and was expected to grow faster in the years ahead, but is already unable to absorb all those who want to attend its schools. Students in the schools were studying under the Jordanian curriculum. Serious physical and pedagogical problems,

including outdated teaching methods and a serious lack of resources, were among the items cited in the report. Some 370 out of the total of 770 classrooms were being rented and did not meet standards. At least 150 new classrooms were needed to meet the expected increase in the number of pupils. Education Minister Yossi Sarid stated: "I don't need any kind of report to know the situation in East Jerusalem, which is poor and which has suffered for years from discrimination and neglect. We say all kinds of fancy things about a united Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is also divided from the standpoint of a comparison of educational conditions between East and West Jerusalem." (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 10 August)

352. On 15 August, it was reported that IDF had decided to try children as young as twelve who have been charged with throwing stones. In recent years, IDF has avoided charging children under the age of 14 in the occupied territories for such actions. During the intifadah, it used various methods, including requiring parents to pay a surety fine which they forfeited if the child was caught repeating the offense. It was reported that the new policy would be implemented over the coming weeks. (*Ha'aretz*, 15 August)

353. On 3 August, it was reported that Israel and the Palestinian Authority were planning a joint operation to prepare for the expected flood of pilgrims at Christian sites during the millennium celebration. On the other hand, Hanna Nasser, the Mayor of Bethlehem, stated that Israeli construction at the entrance to Bethlehem, including plans to expand a major IDF checkpoint, would make it more difficult for pilgrims to visit the biblical city. "They (the Israelis) are targeting the city", the Mayor told a news conference. "They have political interests in cutting off the city from Jerusalem and to bury tourism, especially the millennium celebrations in the Holy Land." At Rachel's Tomb, IDF recently began building a stairway. The Palestinians objected, saying that the work violated the spirit of the peace accords under which neither side was to make unilateral changes on the ground. IDF said security reasons were behind the construction, while Palestinians said that the security was only a pretext. Rachel's Tomb is located along Bethlehem's main north-south thoroughfare, and because of the IDF checkpoint and the security fences around it, one of the highway's two lanes is permanently blocked to traffic, often causing congestion. Several times a week, when Jewish worshippers pray at Rachel's Tomb, the entire road is closed for several hours. (*Jerusalem Post*, 3 August)

354. On 10 August, Israeli police arrived at a perimeter wall of the Temple Mount and sealed a window that was opened by the Wakf two days earlier. The police intervention, which was ordered by Internal Security Minister Ben Ami and backed by Prime Minister Barak, came after the Wakf, the Moslem religious trust that oversees the Al Aqsa Mosque compound, allegedly removed stones in order to widen a window on the southern side of the compound's outer wall. Internal Security Minister Ben Ami stated that the intervention was necessary in order to prevent any change of the delicate status quo prevailing at the Temple Mount, known to Moslems as Al Haram Al Sharif, (the Noble Sanctuary). The Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Ekrema Sabri, sharply denounced the Government's action, saying it was part of larger Israeli effort directed against renovations being conducted by the Wakf in the area along the southern wall of the compound. "We are not breaking the law and this is not a security matter", Sabri stated. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 10-11 August)

II. Situation of human rights in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan

355. On 5 February, it was reported that hundreds of Druze from the Golan were preparing to take part in a mass meeting, scheduled for the day after, to express their support for President Hafez Assad, who had won the presidential elections in the Syrian Arab Republic a week before. The mass gathering was to take place at Magdal Shams village and was to be attended by some 400 people from the four Arab villages in the Golan. An Israeli police officer stated that during the mass meeting police troops will not enter the village but will remain stationed immediately outside; he warned Israelis against entering the village. However, "If civilians or public buildings were to be attacked, a police force will enter the village", he added. (*Ha'aretz*, 5 February)

356. On 6 February, it was reported that some 500 Druze held a peaceful demonstration in the Golan village of Majdal Shams to express support for the Syrian President Hafez Assad, who began his fifth term in office the week before. On the Syrian side of the border, some 700 Druze held a similar demonstration. They gathered to hear speeches delivered near the border fence so that the Druze on the Israeli side could hear them. (*Ha'aretz*, 7 February)

357. On 9 February, it was reported that a new Jewish settlement named Nimrod was being secretly created in the northern Golan. The first family took up residence the week before and another four to eight families were expected in the course of the next two months. Although no formal request was submitted to the Regional Planning and Construction Committee, the settlement became a fait

accompli. A source in the Rural Settlement Division (RSD) of the World Zionist Organization told *Ha'aretz* that the settlement had not been "defined" yet. The site of the settlement was occupied for nine years by the Nahal units of IDF (Nahal soldiers combine military service and agriculture work). A senior Israeli source claimed that an agreement between the Defence Ministry and RSD allowed for "civilianization" of the military outpost. The role of the pioneer family was to establish a presence on the site and to supervise the renovation work being carried out on the structures in preparation for the arrival of additional families. Nimrod is just four km away from Majdal Shams village. A source in RSD stated that the first stage of Nimrod's development was to hold onto the area and to prevent it from being taken over by the Druze. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 February)

358. On 11 February, it was reported that sources in the United States embassy at Tel Aviv had expressed regret over the creation of a new settlement in the Golan which was revealed the day before by *Ha'aretz*. According to *Ha'aretz*, representatives of the American Embassy will tour the settlement, named Nimrod, during the coming few days. The Vice President of the Golan Heights Regional Council stated to *Ha'aretz* that following the *Ha'aretz* article, dozens of citizens had applied to the Council, expressing desire to settle in Nimrod. The couple living there refused to talk with the many journalists who came to the site and did not allow people to enter. Construction and renovations continued to be carried out. (*Ha'aretz*, 11 February)

359. On 14 February, hundreds of Druze from the Golan participated in a peaceful demonstration marking the seventeenth anniversary of the extension of Israeli jurisdiction over the occupied Golan. In 1982, a six-month general strike was held in protest against the imposition of Israeli jurisdiction and the attempt to force the Druze to take Israeli citizenship. According to *Ha'aretz*, only 400 people out of a total of 17,000 Druze living in the Golan carry Israeli identity cards. Most of those who carry Israeli identity cards, added *Ha'aretz*, claim that they were forced to do so and have requested the Israeli Interior Ministry to allow them to renounce their Israeli citizenship. (*Ha'aretz*, 14, 15 February)

360. On 8 March, Israeli Defence Minister Arens stated that the only way the Syrian Arab Republic will make peace is if Israel withdraws from the entire Golan Heights. "This is my position. There is no chance of reaching agreement with Syria without totally conceding the Golan Heights. That is the price. There are those who are ready to pay it. I think that this is a price we should not pay ...", Arens said. (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 March)

361. On 17 April, Israeli police used tear gas to disperse stone throwers at a demonstration by Golan Heights Druze in Majdal Shams to mark Syrian independence day. Crowds of Druze gathered near the so-called Shouting Hill on the outskirts of Majdal Shams near the border with the Syrian Arab Republic. On the opposite side, Syrian Druze and officials had set up a stage with loudspeakers to broadcast independence day events across the border. Earlier, Golan Heights Druze had paraded in Majdal Shams and nearby Mas'ada. (*Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post*, 18 April)

362. On 19 April, IDF border patrol officers arrested a 22-year-old Druze attempting to sneak across the border into the Syrian Arab Republic. Investigators stated that the youth told them he was "tired from living in this country; I am Syrian and I want to live there". (*Ha'aretz*, 20 April)

363. On 8 June, it was reported that the Golan Residents Committee (GRC) was launching a new campaign aimed at rallying public support for keeping the Golan Heights under Israeli rule. GRC called on the National Religious Party and Yisrael Ba'aliya not to join a coalition whose guidelines in talks with Syria were based on the principle of "land for peace". GRC chairman Avi Zeira stated that One Israel's coalition guidelines include acknowledging Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for talks with the Syrian Arab Republic, and that this "denotes a willingness [to withdraw] from the Golan and maybe even beyond that ...". Yigal Kipniss, head of the Derech Leshalom movement, which favours territorial compromise in exchange for peace with the Syrian Arab Republic, stated that the elections showed that the public's attitude towards the Golan Heights in relation to peace with the Syrian Arab Republic had changed. (*Jerusalem Post*, 8 June)

364. On 26 June, President Weizman stated that withdrawing from the Golan Heights is the price Israel has to pay in return for peace with the Syrian Arab Republic and withdrawal from Lebanon. Asked if the major obstacle to Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights was security or psychological, Weizman stated: "There is a lot of psychology in security. Israel and Syria will need a long cooling-off period to trust each other ... (t)he question is: What will be the deployment of the Syrian armed forces — the army, the navy, the air force, the missiles within hitting range of Israel when we have a peace agreement, or do we find a way to minimize the threat? Then, there is the water problem. We live on water coming from the North. Then, there is a big subject known as normalization, but for me it is not very important." (*Jerusalem Post*, 27 June)

365. On 15 July, the Syrian Arab Republic denied that it had ever had secret contacts with Israel and dismissed as "far

from reality" a statement by former Prime Minister Netanyahu to the effect that he had secured a Syrian agreement to allow an IDF presence on Mount Hermon. According to Netanyahu, the Syrian Arab Republic had agreed to the installation of an early warning station, to be used in the event that Damascus regained the Golan Heights through a peace agreement. A Syrian official commenting on the interview stated: "It aims at misleading public opinion and putting obstacles in front of the peace process." (*Jerusalem Post*, 16 July)

366. On 18 July, Prime Minister Barak spoke of a retreat from the Golan Heights as something of a foregone conclusion, stating that he was committed to forging ahead in negotiations with the Syrian Arab Republic on all aspects of a peace agreement. "We abide by 242 and 338 — two relevant Security Council resolutions", stated Barak. "We fully realize that on the way to peace we will have to make compromises." (*Jerusalem Post*, 19 July)